

THE
LETTERS
OF
LETITIA
HARGRAVE

MACLEOD



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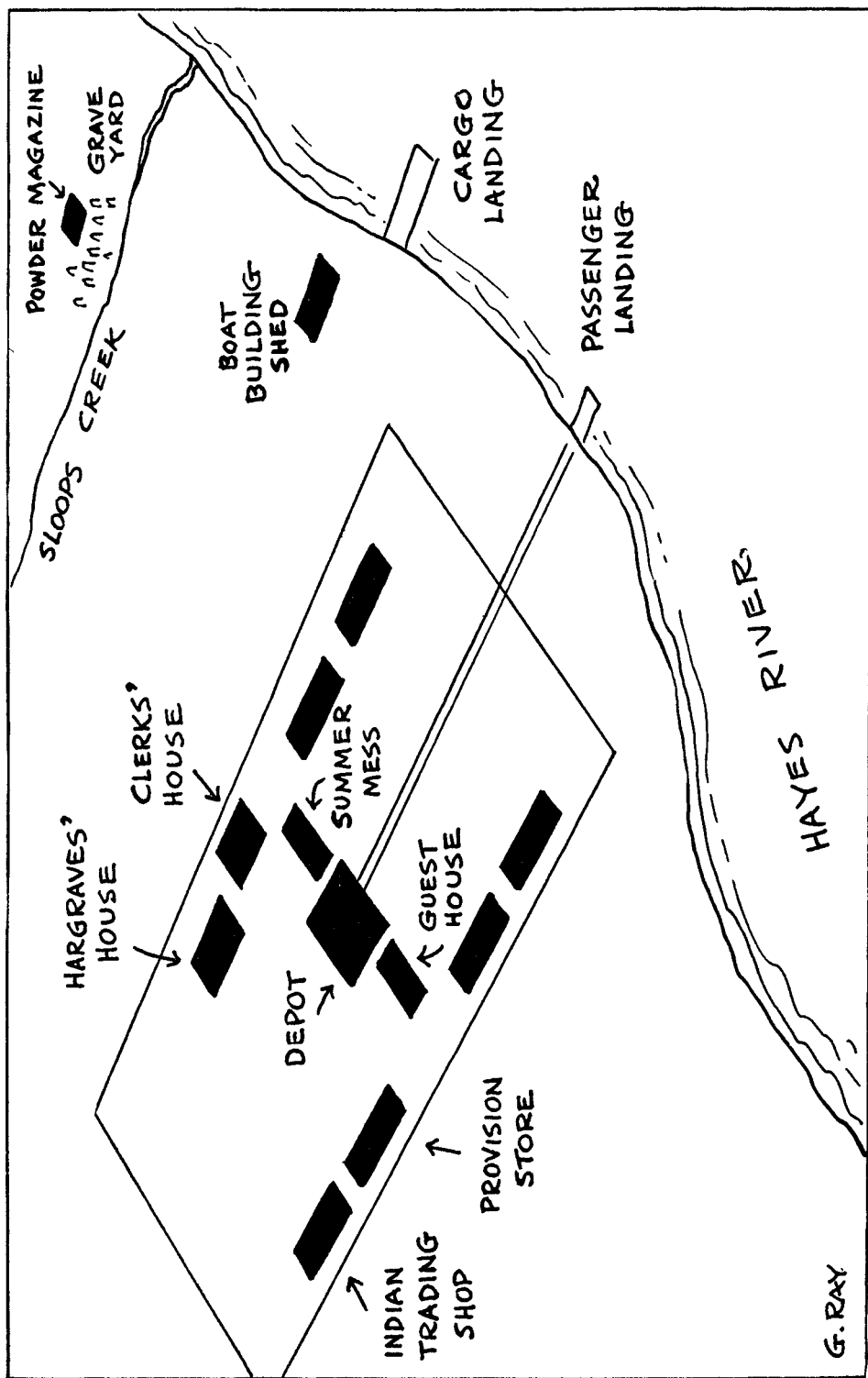
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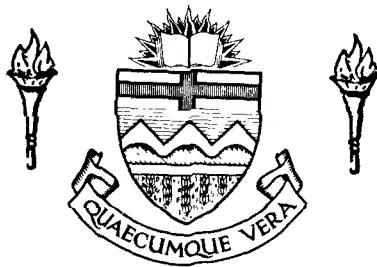
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THE PUBLICATIONS OF
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XXVIII



LETITIA MACTAVISH HARGRAVE, WIFE OF
JAMES HARGRAVE

From a photograph lent by Mrs. J. H. Schofield

THE
PUBLICATIONS OF
THE CHAMPLAIN
SOCIETY

THE LETTERS OF
LETITIA HARGRAVE



TORONTO
THE CHAMPLAIN SOCIETY

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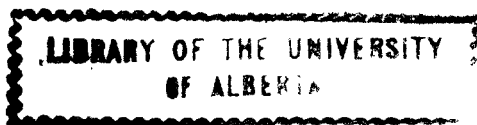
THE LETTERS
OF
LETITIA HARGRAVE

EDITED
WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES
BY
MARGARET ARNETT MACLEOD

TORONTO
THE CHAMPLAIN SOCIETY
1947

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE - - - - -	xiii
INTRODUCTION - - - - -	xix
 LETTERS	
1. To James Hargrave, March 18, 1838 - - - -	3
2. To James Hargrave, May 16, 1838 - - - -	6
3. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, April 29, 1840 - - -	8
4. To Mary Mactavish, May 2, 1840 - - - -	9
5. To Florence Mactavish, May 2, 1840 - - - -	12
6. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, May 5, 1840 - - -	15
7. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, May 9, 1840 - - -	18
8. To Dugald Mactavish Sr., May 9, 1840 - - -	22
9. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, May 14-15, 1840 - -	24
10. To Florence Mactavish, May 15, 1840 - - -	29
11. To Mary Mactavish, May 17, 1840 - - - -	29
12. To Dugald Mactavish Sr., May 21, 1840 - - -	31
13. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, May 21, 1840 - - -	33
14. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, May 22, 1840 - - -	36
15. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, May 26, 1840 - - -	38
16. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, June 5, 1840 - - -	41
17. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, June 6, 1840 - - -	44
18. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, June 7-14, 1840 - -	46
19. To Mary Mactavish, June 15-17, 1840 - - -	50
20. To Dugald Mactavish Sr., June 15-18, 1840 - -	53
21. Letitia Hargrave's diary, Voyage from Stromness to York, June 22 - July 26, 1840 - - - -	56
22. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, September 2-6, 1840 -	58
23. To Florence Mactavish, September 1-5, 1840 - -	64
24. To Mary Mactavish, September 1, 1840 - - -	70
25. To Dugald Mactavish Sr., September 2, 1840 - -	76
26. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, December 1, 1840 - -	81
27. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, February 20, 1841 - -	93
28. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, June 14, 1841 - - -	95
29. To Florence Mactavish, September 4, 1841 - - -	97
30. To Mary Mactavish, September 9, 1841 - - -	99
31. To Dugald Mactavish Sr., September 10, 1841 - -	101
32. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, September 16, 1841 -	103
33. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, May 14, 1842 - - -	104

34. To Dugald Mactavish Sr., May 27, 1842	- - -	114
35. To Dugald Mactavish Sr., September 8, 1842	- - -	116
36. To Florence Mactavish, September 9, 1842	- - -	122
37. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, December 2-9, 1842	- - -	128
38. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, April 1, 1843	- - -	136
39. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, April 10, 1843	- - -	142
40. To Dugald Mactavish Sr., September 9, 1843	- - -	148
41. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, September 10, 1843	- - -	153
42. To Florence Mactavish, September 10, 1843	- - -	160
43. To Mary Mactavish, September 12, 1843	- - -	165
44. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, September 14-17, 1843	- - -	171
45. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, November 29, 1843	- - -	179
46. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, March 30, 1844	- - -	180
47. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, September 9, 1844	- - -	184
48. To Florence Mactavish, September 9, 1844	- - -	186
49. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, November 24-27, 1844	- - -	189
50. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, March 29, 1845	- - -	192
51. To Dugald Mactavish Sr., September 1, 1845	- - -	197
52. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, September 5, 1845	- - -	202
53. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, November 30, 1845	- - -	211
54. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, February 25, 1846	- - -	215
55. To James Hargrave, March 16, 1846	- - -	218
56. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, August 28, 1846	- - -	221
57. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, October 16, 1846	- - -	223
58. To Florence Mactavish, June 18-20, 1847	- - -	224
59. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, June 19-20, 1847	- - -	227
60. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, August 22, 1848	- - -	229
61. To Florence Mactavish, September 8, 1848	- - -	234
62. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, November 29, 1848	- - -	237
63. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, March 29, 1849	- - -	241
64. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, October 30, 1849	- - -	244
65. To Florence Mactavish, August 24, 1850	- - -	249
66. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, August 27-29, 1850	- - -	253
67. To James Hargrave, August 10, 1851	- - -	257
68. To James Hargrave, August 12-13, 1851	- - -	259
69. To James Hargrave, October 5-10, 1851	- - -	261
70. To Mrs. Dugald Mactavish, November 18, 1851	- - -	265
71. To James Hargrave, January 31, 1852	- - -	267
72. To James Hargrave, May 8, 1852	- - -	268

CONTENTS

ix

APPENDIX

1. James Hargrave to Dugald Mactavish, Senior, February 23, 1838 - - - - -	271
2. James Hargrave to Letitia Mactavish, February 23, 1838 - - - - -	272
3. James Hargrave to Letitia Mactavish, February 23, 1838 - - - - -	274
4. James Hargrave to Letitia Mactavish, June 6, 1839 -	275
5. James Hargrave to Letitia Mactavish, July 16, 1839 -	280
6. James Hargrave to John Lee Lewes, June 1, 1841 -	283
7. James Hargrave to Dugald Mactavish, Senior, September 8, 1841 - - - - -	284
8. Marriage contract issued by officers of the Company, February 26, 1842 - - - - -	286
9. James Hargrave to Dugald Mactavish, Senior, August 22, 1845 - - - - -	287
10. James Hargrave to Donald Ross, April 5, 1847 - -	290
11. James Hargrave to Dugald Mactavish, Senior, September 9, 1847 - - - - -	291
12. James Hargrave to J. J. Hargrave, December 1, 1848	293
13. James Hargrave to Donald Ross, November 10, 1850	294
14. J. J. Hargrave to James Hargrave, October 21, 1851 -	299
15. James Hargrave to Donald Ross, December 10, 1851 -	300
INDEX - - - - -	303

ILLUSTRATIONS

GROUND PLAN OF YORK FACTORY	- - -	<i>End-paper</i>
LETITIA MACTAVISH HARGRAVE	- - -	<i>Frontispiece</i>
From a photograph lent by Mrs. J. H. Schofield		
JAMES HARGRAVE	- - - - -	<i>Opposite p. xxv</i>
From a photograph lent by the Hudson's Bay Company		
WILLIAM MACTAVISH	- - - - -	<i>Opposite p. xxxviii</i>
From a photograph lent by the Hudson's Bay Company		
THE GENERAL DEPÔT AT YORK FACTORY	-	<i>Opposite p. xl</i>
From a photograph lent by Mr. George Ray		
THE HARGRAVES' HOUSE AT YORK FACTORY		<i>Opposite p. xlii</i>
From a photograph lent by the Hudson's Bay Company		
JOSEPH JAMES HARGRAVE	- - - - -	<i>Opposite p. lviii</i>
From a photograph lent by Mrs. J. H. Schofield		
LETITIA LOCKHART HARGRAVE	- - - - -	<i>Opposite p. lxxxix</i>
From a photograph lent by Miss Letitia Macfarlane		
MARY JANE HARGRAVE	- - - - -	<i>Opposite p. cxviii</i>
From a photograph lent by Miss Letitia Macfarlane		
MAP SHOWING THE LOCATION OF YORK FACTORY AND OTHER POSTS	- - -	<i>Opposite p. cliv</i>

PREFACE

WHEN the Champlain Society kindly gave me access to the Hargrave manuscripts in their possession in search of certain historical material, I found, in the mass of those papers, two flat insignificant-looking envelopes. They proved to contain thirty-three letters, some parts of which were faded and cross-written almost beyond legibility. These letters are the nucleus of this volume. They were written by Letitia Hargrave to members of her family in Scotland, when she set out, after her marriage in 1840 to Chief Trader James Hargrave, to accompany him to her new home at distant York Factory on Hudson Bay; and they continued throughout ten years of her life there.

I had been intrigued by extracts from Letitia Hargrave's letters as they appeared in articles by Miss A. A. W. Ramsay, published in the Hudson's Bay Company's quarterly, the *Beaver*, in 1940. Now, as I deciphered the originals of some eleven years, I was increasingly convinced that they should see the light as a whole.

When the Champlain Society decided to publish a volume of *Letters of Letitia Hargrave*, we began a search for further letters which might still be in existence. Those in the Champlain Society's possession had been obtained from the late Lady Grierson, Letitia Hargrave's grand-daughter, and some had at that time remained with her husband, Sir Herbert Grierson of Edinburgh. I am greatly indebted to Sir Herbert Grierson for his

very kind co-operation in supplying me with copies of letters in his possession, when during the war there was risk in sending the originals out to me; and also for making available these and further originals through his gift of them to the Champlain Society at the end of the war. I have to thank him also for sending me, during the war, copies of Letitia Hargrave's letters for the year 1841, made by Lady Grierson. These copies, together with some others made by Lady Grierson in the Hargrave manuscripts, are used here, as the originals have not come to light. Some further originals have been obtained from the family of the late Mr. James Hargrave Schofield of Trail, British Columbia, Letitia Hargrave's grandson. Valuable letters by members of the Mactavish family have come to me from Miss Letitia Macfarlane of Crawley, Hampshire, England, a great grand-daughter of Letitia Hargrave. Both Miss Macfarlane and Mrs. James Hargrave Schofield have been most generous not only in lending me these letters, but also in supplying me with family records and photographs. The late Mr. B. G. Grierson of Winnipeg kindly lent me some important letters by James Hargrave. I am fortunate in having had this co-operation from Letitia Hargrave's descendants and their connections, as their contributions have added greatly to the interest and value of this volume.

Fifty-two of Letitia Hargrave's original letters and twenty copies, as being those of widest interest, have been selected for publication in this volume. In order to use every inch of precious space, Letitia did not paragraph her letters. The editor has taken the liberty of doing this, for the sake of the reader. The letters are addressed mainly to her family. Her letters to her husband were largely too personal to be of interest; but

a few have been used, including two written in 1838 during their engagement.

It might be of interest to trace here the history of the letters. Those written to the Mactavish family, after being read and answered, were folded uniformly, superscribed with identifying details, and carefully laid away by Letitia Hargrave's father, Sheriff Dugald Mactavish of Kilchrist House, Campbeltown, as part of the Mactavish family papers. After the Sheriff's death in 1855 they were cared for by his daughter Florence; and after her death in 1888 they joined those of James Hargrave, which were also being carefully preserved. Hargrave, after Letitia's death in 1854 and his retirement and second marriage in 1859, had spent much time at his new home in Brockville, Canada West, in arranging and classifying his large accumulation of papers. He died in 1865. His second wife remained in Canada until the death in 1880 of his married daughter Letitia (or "Tash"); and she then took "Tash's" three daughters and went to live in Edinburgh, Scotland. She took with her also James Hargrave's papers, about which he had left specific instructions.¹ On her death in 1899 the letters came into the possession of "Tash" Hargrave Schofield's

¹It was after Letitia's letters and other Mactavish documents had joined those of James Hargrave in Mrs. Hargrave's keeping, in 1888, that Dr. George Bryce, in search of Red River history, had access to them all in the attic of her house in Edinburgh. In his book, *The remarkable history of the Hudson's Bay Company* (Toronto, 1900), on pp. 294-5, he describes his visit thus: "In a short time author and lawyer found themselves four stories high, in a garret, examining boxes, packages and effects of James Hargrave and his son Joseph. . . . In one large valise were many bundles of letters. These were done up in the most careful manner. The packages were carefully tied with red tape, and each, securely sealed with three black ominous seals, emphasized the effect of the directions written on them, in some cases 'to be opened only by my son,' in others, 'to be opened only by my children.' After some delay the permission of the heirs was obtained, and the packages were opened and examined."

daughters, who often recalled "Granny" Hargrave's respect for this legacy, which they, as children, had never been allowed to touch. Later, those papers of both the Mactavish and Hargrave families which belonged to, or concerned, the Hargraves, were obtained by Lady Grierson (Mary Jane Hargrave Ogston's daughter) from her cousins. And finally, from Lady Grierson these documents, including Letitia Hargrave's letters, passed into the hands of the Champlain Society.

I should like to thank the Governor and Committee of the Hudson's Bay Company of London, England, for much valuable assistance, especially as it was graciously given during the difficult years of the recent war. I wish also to thank Mr. Clifford P. Wilson of Winnipeg, the editor of the *Beaver*; Dr. W. Kaye Lamb, the librarian of the University of British Columbia; Miss Madge Wolfenden, the acting archivist during the war of the provincial archives of British Columbia; Mr. Z. M. Hamilton of Regina, the secretary of the Saskatchewan Historical Society; Mr. J. L. Johnston, the librarian of the provincial library in Winnipeg; and Major Gustave Lanctot, the Dominion archivist; all of whom have given generous aid in supplying information and directing searches.

My special thanks are due to Dr. R. O. MacFarlane, deputy minister of education in the province of Manitoba, and formerly professor of history in the University of Manitoba, for his valuable advice and guidance; and also to Mr. W. Stewart Wallace, the president of the Champlain Society, for his encouragement and unceasing assistance throughout the preparation of the book. Finally, Miss Julia Jarvis, the assistant secretary-

PREFACE

xvii

treasurer of the Society, has made the admirable index and helped to see the book through the press.

MARGARET ARNETT MACLEOD

Winnipeg, Manitoba,
May 24, 1947.

INTRODUCTION

§I. *From Scotland to York Factory*

LETITIA HARGRAVE'S letters describe a woman's life in the fur-trade in Rupert's Land during the years from 1838 to 1852. Valuable first hand accounts of the lives of pioneer women in Eastern Canada have long been known; but as far as can be discovered, Letitia Hargrave is the only woman to enrich thus the history of Western Canada. The letters written at York Factory, Manitoba's oldest settlement, give a unique and intimate picture of that important Hudson's Bay Company depot, and touch as well on the more general aspects of the fur-trade. Those written in London in 1840 afford glimpses of social life and customs there, in a period none too rich in such records.

In exploring the original letters page by page one senses the personality of the writer, and finds much atmosphere. Literally, Letitia put as much as possible on every page. Not a quarter inch was wasted in headings, endings, or margins, and there was little paragraphing and much cross-writing in red ink; all because of the expense in postage to the recipients, and the necessity for reducing bulk to the minimum in the Company's letter-bags. Even the thin ink, which was at its worst after freezing, was eloquent of life at York Factory. One looks over her shoulder as she writes, and sees her trail her dignified but sprightly Victorian skirts across the early Canadian scene she so well portrays.

Letitia Hargrave was the first of a substantial family of three daughters and six sons born to Dugald Mactavish and his wife, Letitia Lockhart. Dugald was the eldest son of Lachlan Mactavish, Chief of Clan Tavish, who, becoming impoverished, had been forced to part with the ancestral seat, Dunardry, in Argyllshire, in 1785. Letitia was born in Edinburgh in 1813, probably at No. 14, Hill Street, since this was her parents' residence at the time. By the winter of 1821-2 Dugald Mactavish had moved his family to Kilchrist House, a fine property of about eight acres near Campbeltown, Argyllshire, which thereafter remained his home. He was a lawyer, and shortly was appointed sheriff, or chief judge of the county, with Campbeltown as the seat of his court.

Letitia and her sisters were given the education of girls in their position in county society, ending with a ladies' finishing-school. In background, education, manners, and feeling, Letitia is easily recognizable in the young ladies of Sir Walter Scott's period. Her two younger sisters, Florence (Flora), and Mary (Polly), appear frequently in her letters. Mary died in 1846. Florence, who remained single, cared for Letitia's two daughters after their mother's death in 1854 until their father's second marriage in 1859.

Fur-trade connections came into the family in 1794 through Simon McTavish, the principal partner in the North West Company. Having made a fortune in Canada, he visited Scotland, introduced himself to Lachlan, the Chief of his Clan, and some years later bought Dunardry. The Chief died in 1796. Two years later Simon McTavish, through the friendship which had been established, took the Chief's second son, John

George McTavish,¹ into the service of his Company. John George had been educated in Edinburgh, and after serving in the North West Company until its union with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1821, he entered the new Hudson's Bay Company in 1821, and became one of its most influential officers. He is the much-loved "Uncle John" of Letitia's letters.

Through the influence of this uncle the two eldest of Letitia's six brothers, William and Dugald, entered the Hudson's Bay Company's service in 1833, when John George McTavish had become one of its prominent chief factors. William eventually became governor of Rupert's Land; and Dugald, who also rose in the service, spent most of his years at Fort Vancouver. The third brother, John George (called John in Letitia's letters) migrated about 1836 to Tobago in the West Indies, where he engaged in the sugar trade; Hector followed William and Dugald into the Hudson's Bay Company's service in 1844, but was drowned after only a few months in the country; and Lockhart and Alexander settled in Australia. William and Dugald appear more or less prominently throughout their sister's letters; Hector appears for a short time; and John, Lockhart, and Alexander are mentioned only in passing.

Letitia's brothers William and Dugald began their careers in the Hudson's Bay Company in 1833 as clerks. William spent his first year at Norway House; and then, through his uncle's influence with Governor George Simpson, was sent to York Factory to serve under James

¹See W. S. Wallace, "More light on Simon McTavish" (*The Beaver*, December, 1941, pp. 48-9); A. A. W. Ramsay, "Letters from Letitia Hargrave" (*The Beaver*, June, 1940, p. 18). John George McTavish, to conform with the practice of his patron, Simon McTavish, spelled his name "McTavish." His brother the sheriff, and his family, spelled it "Mactavish."

Hargrave.¹ Hargrave was a fellow Scot, and a protégé of John George McTavish, who wrote to his brother, the sheriff, that "William is gone into good careful hands . . . with a young Gentleman whom I have been mainly instrumental in pushing forward to a Commission who under a very becoming feeling of gratitude will contribute all he can both to his improvement and comfort." Dugald served at different posts; and both brothers in their letters home gave detailed accounts of their new life.²

William Mactavish and James Hargrave became sincere friends, and their friendship deepened with the years. It followed therefore that when Hargrave went on furlough to Britain during the winter of 1837-8 he promised to visit William's family at Kilchrist House. William furnished him with a letter of introduction. Dugald also wrote about him, since it happened that he travelled from Lake Superior to Lachine in Hargrave's canoe, when the latter set out on his furlough in September, 1837. After detailing Hargrave's kindnesses to them, both boys requested of their father that "every attention in your power be paid him"; and Dugald added that the visitor might be expected at Kilchrist House "about the Christmas holidays."³

James Hargrave was the son of Joseph Hargrave and his wife Jane Melrose. Hargrave family history went back six hundred years. A Covenanter ancestor, a

¹See G. P. de T. Glazebrook (ed.), *The Hargrave correspondence* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1938), pp. xv-xix; and W. S. Wallace (ed.), *Documents relating to the North West Company* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1934), pp. 454-5.

²See Glazebrook, *The Hargrave correspondence*, pp. 145-55.

³All the quotations in this introduction are from the Hargrave manuscripts and letter books in the possession of the Champlain Society, unless otherwise identified.

preacher and teacher, who had survived persecution, established himself at Hawick in Roxburghshire in 1645, and his library, treasured by his descendants, formed James Hargrave's first serious reading. Here, in Hawick, the family home for more than two hundred years, James Hargrave was born. In one of his journals he fixes the date as November 19, 1798.¹ He was educated at Galashiels and finished at Fysshie's Academy at the age of eighteen, when he began to teach in the nearby village school of Lindern. His older brothers had played as children under the great Kelso bridge on the banks of the river Tweed with a neighbouring lad who later became Sir Walter Scott; and at Lindern, James, who was scholarly and popular, used to be visited by that old family playmate, who was now rising to fame.

James's father, Joseph Hargrave, had by 1819 become manager of a large estate, but he could see no future there for his family. Urged on by James, who stayed behind another year, his father emigrated with his family to Canada, where he joined a brother near Montreal.² James followed in 1820. He spent his first winter in the country at Sault Ste. Marie, as clerk in the North West Company, and in the spring of 1821 he was sent to Fort William. There he served until late summer under John George McTavish, the man who was so greatly to influence his future.

Following the union of the North West and Hudson's Bay Companies in the summer of 1821, John George McTavish, now a chief factor in the new Company, went to take charge at York Factory; and Hargrave, retained

¹From p. 6 of the journal of James Hargrave, 1828-9, in the McGill University Library.

²This information is from a manuscript history in the possession of James Hargrave's descendants.

as a clerk in the new Company, was posted to the Red River Settlement. During the next six years Hargrave served in winter at Red River and in summer at York Factory, where extra help was needed in the busy season, and where he was happy to be back under his old *bourgeois*, McTavish. In 1827 he was permanently stationed at York. In 1830 McTavish was succeeded at York by Alexander Christie; so that Hargrave, having thus been trained under two of the Company's ablest officers, was well fitted to assume charge when in 1833 that responsibility, together with his chief tradership, was given him.

Four years later, James Hargrave went to Britain with the intention of marrying there. Early in his service he had formed a strong prejudice against marriage with women of the country. In his opinion Red River, which was the best Rupert's Land could offer as a place of retirement, meant for the husband banishment from the cultured and ordered life of settled countries; and retirement elsewhere often brought unhappiness to the wife, and through her to the husband also. The matter was ever a subject for discussion among the young clerks, and Hargrave even made a pact against it with his friend, George Barnston. The far from happy life of John George McTavish at York with his "wife of the country," Nancy McKenzie,¹ afforded Hargrave first hand evidence. While Hargrave sympathized with the girl in her devastating grief when in 1830 McTavish, who had gone to Scotland, married there, yet he rejoiced with his beloved *bourgeois* in the new alliance, which he termed "so proper and suitable." He expressed his feeling about "country marriages" to Donald Ross,

¹See A. S. Morton, *Sir George Simpson* (Toronto, 1944), pp. 165-6.



JAMES HARGRAVE

From a photograph lent by the Hudson's Bay Company.

saying "Your white family will yet be a credit to you—I still want the chance of such." There was frequently sage advice in his letters to friends whom he considered in danger of a "country alliance." To Donald McKenzie, a clerk at Oxford House, he wrote:

In short the report is quite current here that you have sent your late *cara spousa* an invitation to assume her old position in thy bed and a legal union is to be the reward of her compliance. Good. I only wish for your own sake that you had a view of the end of these things before you run your head in the noose. As sure as you [do], so sure will Red River be the [place] to which she will canter away with you when misfortune or age closes your present avocation. To such as you & I, take my word for it, this place is the antipodes of a paradise. Neither of us are fitted to become cormorants & prey upon the catfish; neither, I guess, would pass our time very agreeably day after day by the side of a pool like a heron watching a frog. Such is an odd sort of a road to happiness, yet such is the present fate of many here who once held our rank in the country & to which matrimony alone has paved the way. Weigh this alternative my dear fellow and consider whether such an end is not paying too dear for your whistle.

When therefore Hargrave was granted a necessary furlough for his health in 1837, he went to Britain with the definite idea of finding a wife. At thirty-nine he had for some time been feeling the passage of the years. Early in January, 1838, he duly visited the Mactavish family at Kilchrist House, and there, within a fortnight, he knew he had met his fate in Letitia. When he left, it was with the intention of making a tour of the Border country with his friend Duncan Finlayson, who was also home on furlough, after which he meant to return and put his fate to the test with Letitia and her father. He intended to sue for a speedy marriage and to take his bride back with him to York Factory in June.

At Galashiels, however, a letter from Governor

Simpson awaited him, summoning him to London, and saying that he must go back to York in the spring instead of summer, as two of the officers there were ill. He was much perturbed. He decided that since he could not carry out his plans as formulated, he would write to Sheriff Mactavish and Letitia and at least learn the outcome of his hopes before leaving England. At London the Governor promised him another furlough soon, should his suit be accepted, so he sent off the projected letters to Mactavish and Letitia on February 23.¹ The correspondence was delayed; and though the Governor rushed the replies to his letters after him to Portsmouth, he sailed on March 18 without receiving them.² Fortunately, however, favourable replies from Letitia and her father reached him at Lachine, so that he was able to write to them before starting off in the spring canoes for York, telling again of the promised furlough, and saying that he would come to claim Letitia as soon as it could be arranged. This proved to be in the following year.³ On September 7, 1839, he sailed from York by the yearly ship, leaving his friend Nicol Finlayson in charge of the Factory, with minute instructions as to its management in his absence.

Hargrave arrived at Kilchrist House early in December, and he and Letitia were married on January 8, 1840. In the inclement winter weather they took only a short wedding tour round Edinburgh and Glasgow. Letitia introduced her husband to her friends: the Worsleys and Hamiltons in Edinburgh, the Loudouns, Campbells, Duncans, and others in Glasgow. They then

¹For these letters see appendix, pp. 271-5.

²For Letitia's reply to Hargrave's letters of February 23, see letter 1, p. 3.

³See appendix, p. 276.

returned to Kilchrist House, where they remained until the last days of April.

Sheriff Mactavish, like his father, had difficulty in managing his finances, and he looked to his sons' settlement in life as a partial solution of his problems. Hargrave lent a helping hand with Hector's future by applying to Governor Simpson to take him also into the Company's service. John George McTavish had spoken of his brother's "oft repeated calls" upon his means, until he had refused to help him longer, and he later asked Hargrave to caution the Mactavish boys "not to be feeding their father's extravagance by sending him too great a proportion of their earnings." Though Hargrave knew of this weakness, when the Sheriff applied to him in a current difficulty, he nevertheless, in the generosity of his new found happiness, guaranteed that gentleman's credit at his Campbeltown bank to the extent of £300.

Before they left Kilchrist House, Hargrave took Letitia's good-byes to her friends in Glasgow and Edinburgh, partings she would not face. Though she says little about it, there is evidence that she keenly felt leaving home. No doubt she remembered William's poignant words, written at York long after his departure from home, presaging the ordeal before her. "I still fancy you all as you were the last time I saw you," he had written, "every look . . . every word that passed during the last breakfast I had at Kilchrist. I cannot even think of our parting but tears stand in my eyes. . . I recollect coming down stairs & meeting Lockhart. I was in such agony I hardly knew what I was doing. I seized his hand & squeezed it so violently that the tears ran over his cheeks." However, William was to be with them at York, and she would see Dugald occasionally.

xxviii LETTERS OF LETITIA HARGRAVE

As Hargrave had written, she would be leaving one part of her family only to join another.¹

Governor and Mrs. Simpson had duly sent congratulations on the Hargraves' marriage. The Governor later suggested that a convenient place for them to stay when they came to London would be the "George and Vulture," which was practically round the corner from Hudson's Bay House on Fenchurch Street, and for that reason was much patronized by the Company's officers on furlough in London. This letter was written for him by his wife on account of his eye trouble. He told of selling his house in Trinity Square, as town life did not agree with his health, and outlined his plan to take up quarters shortly at Gravesend. Then, with his usual keen eye to business, and to Hargrave's attention to it, as well as to the pleasure of all concerned, he continued, "After the first ten days or a Fortnight it might suit you, to take Lodgings close to ourselves at Gravesend when the wives could spend the days together while you and I visited Town by the Steam boat, as I mean to attend to business closely, leaving my wife at 8 o'clock in the morning, and returning home to a 6 o'clock dinner."

Letitia's letters after leaving Kilchrist House were full of the sights and sensations of a world new to her. There was much to call for her comment: the amazing new steam travel and various incidents of the journey; their arrival at Euston Station, the terminus of the London and North Western railway; and finally, the ride over London's cobble-stoned streets to their destination, the "George and Vulture." This inn, an old blackened building, is up narrow George Yard off Lombard Street. It dates from the twelfth century.

¹See appendix, p. 279.

Rebuilt after suffering in the Great Fire of 1666, it has today survived the Great Blitz of 1940, and continues to be much visited by sightseers. Noted men of letters had frequented it throughout the centuries, but none left any account of its life. It became famous through fiction, as the "favorite city headquarters" of Charles Dickens's characters, Mr. Pickwick and his friends. Letitia Hargrave, in recording actual life there, makes a valuable contribution to its history. Dickens could see only London at the old inn. He missed entirely a romantic aspect of its life in the comings and goings of the fur-traders. Nor did he see that the paving-stones of London had been the ballast of their priceless cargoes.¹ It was left for R. M. Ballantyne, a few years later, to discover the romance of their life.²

It was to the London of Dickens that Letitia came. It was well known that he frequented the "George and Vulture," and Letitia expected that he would be at Mrs. Warriner's party.³ She was fascinated by the omnibuses of "Boz," whose *Sketches* had caused such a *furor*, and by the streets—Monmouth Street, "the burial place of fashions"—and all the sights and sounds that Dickens had made familiar.⁴ But if it was to Dickens's London she came, it was Hudson's Bay Company atmosphere she for the first time entered. The newly married couple were immediately "taken by the hand" by the Governor and his wife. Letitia and Mrs. Simpson liked each other at once, and Hargrave had known the Governor's wife since the summer of 1830, when as a bride of eighteen

¹David Anderson, *The net in the bay* (London, 1873), p. 174.

²Robert M. Ballantyne, *Hudson's Bay; or every-day life in the wilds of North America* (1st ed., Edinburgh, 1847).

³See letter 4, p. 10.

⁴See letter 14, p. 37.

years she had come with her husband to Council at York. The Simpsons had also been most kind to Hargrave when he was in London in 1837-8.¹ Now he and Letitia found themselves in a congenial little circle of Company people and Simpson connections.

Hargrave's friend, Duncan Finlayson, who had spoken on his behalf at Kilchrist House two years previously, had married Mrs. George Simpson's elder sister Isobel before returning to Red River in 1839 to be governor of Assiniboia; but her health, truly Victorian, had been too delicate at the time to allow her to accompany him. Hargrave was now able to return his friend's favour, as Mrs. Finlayson was to accompany the Hargraves to York where her husband would meet her. "Her purpose is most firm to join you ensuing summer," Hargrave had written to Finlayson, "and I need not repeat that till she reach you I shall watch over her comfort and happiness with the deep interest of a brother." Letitia found not only these two daughters but the whole Geddes Simpson family most interesting; and it was the beginning of a life-long friendship between herself and the two sisters, mainly through correspondence as it proved, since their homes were always far separated.

The Hargraves were kept busy with dinner and other invitations, rounds of calls, and sight-seeing visits to the Royal Art Gallery and to Covent Garden. Letitia

¹While on this furlough in Scotland, Hargrave obtained for Mrs. George Simpson a memento of Sir Walter Scott, a lock of his hair; and Simpson sent Hargrave on January 19, 1838, one of his few letters in a light vein on the incident: "I do not consider it prudent to allow you and my wife to continue your sentimental correspondence. I shall therefore cut in and have 'a say in the subject' myself. . . . My wife absolutely raves about the lock of the immortal Sir Walter's Whisker you are to obtain for her, at one time she talks of getting it set in a Ring, at another in a Locket, in short she has a thousand plans about it; she never made half so great a fuss about *my* locks."

exhibited the Victorian lady's lively interest in the doings and sayings of royalty, and she sent off minute descriptions of the latest London fashions to her sisters. There was shopping for carpets and silver, the buying of a piano, and the making of arrangements about her servant, as preparations were perfected to sail for York in June. The Hargraves considered themselves fortunate in securing Margaret Dunnet as servant. Her father, John Dunnet, a tailor in Edinburgh, had served in that capacity at York, but had retired in 1834. Thus Margaret, having lived at York, was more apt to content herself in a familiar environment than a girl new to the country. Since his return to Edinburgh, Dunnet, in addition to being Hargrave's tailor, had executed various commissions for him. At the present time Hargrave was having made to his order for Letitia, "1 pr. Ladies calf skin walking shoes, 1 pr. very best calf skin Ladies Half Boots the leather dressed with the hair upon it or otherwise lined to preserve the foot warm airy and comfortable." These Margaret was to bring with her when she joined them. Hargrave spent some time too in conference with Governor Pelly with regard to the piece of plate which he and Alexander Christie were deputed by the officers of the Northern Department to have made as a gift for Governor Simpson.

The Governor's idea of moving to Gravesend proved popular with no one, not even himself, but Letitia tried to content herself there in the tedium of a place "only remarkable for quiet and shrimps." His carrying-off again of his family when they were no more than settled there, and Letitia's ill-health, did not make matters easier for her; but an interval in London, and a visit to some friends of the Simpsons called Webster in West

Ham, Essex, helped to relieve the dullness.¹ It was while she was in Essex that her father, on Hargrave's advice, came to London to confirm with Governor Simpson his promise to take her brother Hector into the Company's service; so the Sheriff went to see his daughter at West Ham.

Hargrave subsequently wrote to Letitia, still in the country, of her father's departure from London, and other matters:

The Governor dropped in on us last night at 5, dined with the Sheriff and me at Joe's²—"went the whole hog" after by discussing some first rate port. . . . At a quarter to 8 we saw him & Baggage safely stowed into the Railway Omnibus & by this time I have no doubt he is on his way from Liverpool to Glasgow. Malgré my protestation, he purchased one, two, nay three Blouses and set sail in a Grey Linen one that wrapt him up like a Bale of canvas. But why should I expose him—I have myself been riding my hobby as boldly in my own way. One step of mine has been the acquisition of a Bale of old Literature a cheap & perhaps you will think a dear Bargain. The next was a case containing a Stomach pump & Enema apparatus. Further I have been plunging through moist & dry [illegible] after Brokers Co. Ho. officers & all such cattle to get our piano on board which I think is accomplished by this time. By the bye—Mr. Christie has persuaded me against a chest of oranges. He threatens loss waste & rot and recommends a few dozen instead from Gravesend on setting sail—you shall decide me.

Hargrave had written Letitia earlier about purchasing

¹Hargrave to J. G. McTavish, August 19, 1840: "We left Kintyre late in April & in London & Gravesend spent the time till the ship sailed most delightfully. Mr. & Mrs. Simpson were most kind & Letitia was especially delighted with the latter. They introduced her to all their friends & as her health was delicate Mrs. Webster fairly carried her off from me for a week to West Ham in order that she might have the benefit of advice from her family physician."

²"Joe's" figured with "Garraway's" and "Robins's" as one of the three celebrated coffee houses of London. "Joe's" was much patronized by buyers and sellers of stocks.

“a pair of Mrs. Loudoun’s pattern of Toddy Jugs and a set of Lockhart’s Life of Scott for the amusement of your voyage.” He was concerned with another matter also. The Governor had pledged his influence toward a “step up” in the service this year; and Hargrave wrote before leaving England to those of his friends who would be at Council in the summer, asking for their support.

The yearly departure of the Company’s ships for Rupert’s Land is well described in R. M. Ballantyne’s *Hudson’s Bay*, including the customary big dinner at Gravesend,¹ of which Letitia speaks, and incidents in the Orkneys. Stromness was the last point touched by the ships on setting out for Hudson Bay, and Letitia found there an even stronger Company atmosphere. It was steeped in fur-trade traditions. The same routine for the ships which she and Ballantyne describe had been going on there for a hundred years, but she had yet to discover that men from the rugged Orkney Islands, both officers and servants, had been and still were the backbone of the Company’s trade in Rupert’s Land.

The Hargraves visited the mother of Hargrave’s friend, John Ballenden, widow of the John Ballenden who had been governor at York in 1798-1802;² and Letitia touched upon another old Stromness family in her description of a party given by a Mrs. Rae. Margaret Glen Rae, of an historic Argyllshire family, was the widow of John Rae, whom Edward Clouston had succeeded as the Company’s agent in Stromness about 1836. Three sons of John and Margaret Rae had entered the service: William Glen, then on the Columbia; Richard, who had resigned and was then at home on a visit; and Dr. John,

¹See letter 16, p. 42, n.

²See letter 19, p. 52, n.

at Moose Factory, with whom the Hargraves were to form a delightful friendship later. Richard Rae had served at York, but had later gone into business with another brother, Thomas, in Hamilton, Upper Canada.¹ Sir Walter Scott had chosen Mrs. Rae's two beautiful daughters for the characters of "Minna" and "Brenda" in his novel *The Pirate*; and "Brenda," who had become Mrs. Hamilton,² was present at the party. This took place at the old family home which Mrs. Rae was soon to leave, the ancient Hall of Clestrain, on the rocky shore overlooking the Cairston Roads. Her husband's lifetime interest, and her own, lay below where the Company's ships anchored to take on cargoes and passengers and wait for a fair wind to sail. There, even now, the *Prince Rupert* could be seen.

Hargrave later wrote to John Ballenden, "I need not say that I kept my promise in calling upon that worthy old lady your mother whose reception of Mrs. H. & myself was very kind indeed." To William Glen Rae he wrote: On our way hither last summer we touched as usual at Stromness where among other friends to whom I became known I had the great pleasure of meeting your most excellent mother who I am happy to acquaint you was then enjoying the best of health. Mrs. Hamilton too—to whom I have long been attached under the name of 'Brenda,' also realized similar feelings under her proper designation &c. To crown all, who should I meet but my chum and messmate young Dick [Richard Rae] who had just dropt in on them from Upper Canada via Glasgow. We spent a delightful week you may imagine and I left your native shores with the liveliest and warmest impressions of the kindness and extremely hospitable feelings of the resident Gentry.

¹This information obtained from family records consulted through the kindness of Miss Marion Scarth, Toronto.

²Mrs. Hamilton and her husband later joined Richard and Thomas Rae at Hamilton, where, after a long life, she died. Dr. Hamilton practised for a time in the village of Dundas, near Hamilton.

Letitia described this gala week in detail. As N.M.W.J. McKenzie wrote of the Company's ships at Stromness, "the ship's officers held high carnival during their stay there, having dinner parties on board and ashore and dancing every evening."¹ But the gala week having ended, Letitia said nothing about leaving the Clouston's hospitable roof on June 22, nor of reluctantly going back on shipboard to their cramped quarters again, for the long journey. Nor did she mention the *Prince Rupert* sailing out Hoy Sound with the ebb tide next day, the finality of the parting salute from the nearby battery on Point of Ness, and their ship's reply as they passed out to sea.

However, after she recovered from the effects of rough weather, and found herself surrounded by fellow passengers who were all interested, like herself, in Rupert's Land, she seemed fairly cheerful. Her letters show that the beautiful though unsuitable clothes of one of the passengers, the extravagant Miss Jane Ross, were a source of interest. Hargrave no doubt suspected that they would also be a source of financial embarrassment to her father, Donald Ross, which suspicion was later verified, with the exact amount, by William Mactavish, the Company's accountant at York. The personal accounts of every officer and servant in the service were kept there; and in a country which provided few topics of interest, these accounts seemed to be common property which even the reticent William had no scruples in divulging. George Simpson managed the incident with his usual suavity. He wrote to Donald Ross, "Finlayson writes me that your face seemed to lengthen when you

¹N. M. W. J. McKenzie, *The men of the Hudson's Bay Company* (Fort William, 1920), pp. 7, 8.

saw the amount of Jane's bills. . . I sent my wife shopping with her, to assist with her advice as to the quality of the articles. If she has been extravagant I am sorry for it but as she will not have an opportunity of sinning in like manner again, you have, with your usual indulgence, by this time I dare say, forgiven her. . . . Both Mrs. Simpson and myself . . . feel the most lively interest in her and sincerely hope to learn that she may soon be well settled in life."¹

On the voyage to Hudson Bay, Eskimo were not always encountered, and so there was lively interest on board the *Prince Rupert* when some of these people were sighted. Letitia reports with considerable accuracy the words and meaning of their pidgin vocabulary. When she described the women, however, she made the mistake of saying that the naked baby, which is carried against the mother's naked back, was in her hood, an error which is still commonly made.

Once in the open waters of Hudson Bay the end of the journey drew near, and the hardships described by Letitia, owing in part to the *Prince Rupert* being a cargo ship, were soon over.

Some of Hargrave's friends feared this venture of a Scotswoman, new to the country, living at York. The family at Kilchrist House had already known something of life in Rupert's Land, and Hargrave had made an honest effort to place the facts before them. Still, even while facing facts, it was natural that both Hargrave and Letitia should have some romantic notions about it. These possibly served them well in the years ahead by lightening stern conditions, as Letitia's letters at times

¹Provincial Archives of British Columbia, Donald Ross Papers, Simpson to Donald Ross, December 2, 1840.

would indicate. Hargrave had written to her from York describing the Indians: "There is a sketch of your new subjects for you!—to complete which, know that when they may chance to see you, you will be regarded as a superior order of being throughout the kingdom of York—more than equal to twice the size of Great Britain!"¹ Nicol Finlayson had been concerned lest Mrs. George Simpson, from her own unhappy experiences in Red River, should paint for Letitia a dark picture of the country; but she had touched only on the lighter side, and was most helpful with advice on intimate matters and future needs. Hargrave later wrote to a friend, "Mrs. H. is a niece of my old bourgeois J. G. McTavish, and consequently looked to this country with fewer feelings of apprehension than most of our Scottish Ladies would have done—noted as they are for their firmness and courage in enduring all that is to be met with in foreign climes." Thus Letitia, in her new happiness and with youth's zest for new experiences, faced exile in a frozen country, in so far as she could visualize it, with interest and high hope.

The *Prince Rupert* reached York Roads on August 9, 1840, and her passengers caught the faint scent of spruce from land still invisible. The routine of arrival, as described by Ballantyne in 1841,² might just as accurately be that of 1840: the ship's guns announcing her presence, the coming alongside of the launch from the Factory to pick up letter-bag, packet-box, and cabin passengers, and the landing. Letitia, however, adds a vivid touch in describing herself so weak and ill from the trials of the

¹See appendix, p. 280.

²Robert M. Ballantyne, *Hudson's Bay; or every-day life in the wilds of North America during six years' residence in the territories of the honourable Hudson's Bay Company* (2nd ed., Edinburgh, 1848), pp. 18-25.

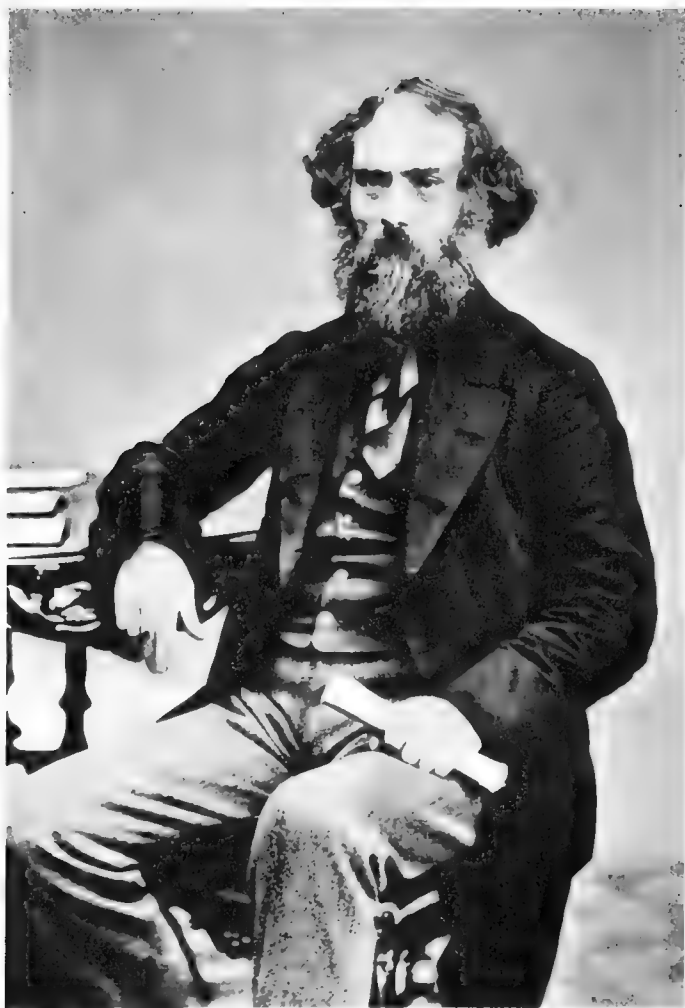
voyage that her brother William did not recognize her when he came for her on the launch; and in telling of how, on being lowered into it the next day, she promptly turned her back on her fellow passengers and had a good cry. Her pent-up feelings thus relieved, she seems to have revived quickly, even as to her sense of humour, as they landed and moved up the bank to her new home.

§II. *Life at York Factory*

York Factory was on the north bank of the Hayes River about six miles above its entrance into Hudson Bay. The river spread shallowly over perfectly flat country, and the south bank was dimly visible across more than a mile of water. York had been the main depot of the re-organized Hudson's Bay Company since 1821, in a vicinity in which there had been forts since 1682. From 1821 to 1829 the post had been under John George McTavish, to whom James Hargrave ascribed his excellent business training, and from 1830 to 1833 under Alexander Christie; and these two men had transformed a dilapidated post into an efficient place of business, which since 1833 had continued to go forward under Hargrave. It was a depot that now served almost the whole northern half of a continent. With even his own district more than twice the size of Great Britain, it was not surprising that Hargrave spoke of Letitia's new home as her "kingdom of York."

Hargrave described York's weather as "nine months of winter varied by three of rain and mosquitoes," and J. B. Nevins, the surgeon of the *Prince Rupert* in 1842, wrote:

It is so near the Bay that it is subject to great and sudden changes of weather. In the morning it is sometimes so hot that only light



WILLIAM MACTAVISH

From a photograph lent by the Hudson's Bay Company.

summer clothing can be worn and in the afternoon a breeze may spring up from the north or northeast and bring such a cold fog with it that warm winter garments are essential. The country surrounding it is all marsh and swamp, so that you cannot walk half a mile in any direction without sinking up to the ankles or knees. . . . The trees around the factory are pines, willows, birches and poplars, but small and stunted. In walking among them you can see over them in many places . . . they have to go five miles from the factory before they can find any worth cutting for firewood.¹

The whole point of land that lay between the Hayes and Nelson(North) Rivers, from York Factory down to where they emptied close together into Hudson Bay, was known as Point of Marsh. On its furthestmost tip towered the Beacon, and Indians attached to the fort as hunters camped there to listen for and report the ships' guns. It was a hunter's paradise, filled with game which long since has disappeared. Here the gentlemen from the fort had a hunting lodge, and the place was the scene of their pastimes of shooting and trapping.

Letitia's party, on coming up the Hayes River in the launch, passed the powder magazine and graveyard on the banks of Sloops Creek. Then came the boat-building shed, the quay for landing cargo, and finally, in front of the fort, the passenger landing.

The scene that awaited Letitia when she reached the top of the bank on August 10, 1840, was not an inspiring one. A desolate waste of green swamp grass and small scrub spread as far as the eye could see; and in a picketed enclosure of about five acres, stood a group of white wooden buildings dominated by a huge one in the centre.²

¹J. B. Nevins, *A narrative of two voyages to Hudson's Bay, with traditions of the North American Indians* (London, 1847), pp. 38-9.

²The size of this building, 100 by 105 feet, was unique in Rupert's Land. The Cree name for York meant "Great House." The building dated at least

One object alone rose above these to catch the eye: a tall flagstaff near the main building flying the Company's flag. York's characteristic but not unpleasant odour of spruce and pine pervaded all. This was Letitia's new world. There was nothing further. She could embrace it all in one glance.

The picketed enclosure¹ was divided into two quadrangles, front and back, by three buildings: the guest house, the large general depot, and the summer mess-house, which stretched across the middle of it. Ballantyne wrote, "Four roomy fur stores stand at right angles to these houses, thus forming three sides of the front square." Dr. Nevins wrote, "It is built entirely of wood and forms two quadrangles about one hundred yards long. The front quadrangle has only three sides, as the place of the fourth is supplied by the river, which runs in front of it. A long platform runs from the centre of the furthest side down to the river. . . A raised wooden platform runs in front of each side, upon which you are obliged to walk in wet weather, and which is preferable even in dry." This was because the ground some feet below the surface never thawed. The buildings were on piles encircled by drains. At this season, a step off the platform meant bog to the ankles and swarms of mosquitoes.² The only exception

from the eighteen-twenties. It was partially torn down in 1831, and was rebuilt under Alexander Christie in 1831-3; but it was not finally finished, with a wing added to each side, until 1838. It was unique also in being constructed, in order to facilitate the drying of furs, with an open court in the centre, like buildings in warmer countries.

¹Isaac Cowie, *The Company of Adventurers* (Toronto, 1913), pp. 108-9.

²Dugald Mactavish, Junior, to his mother, July 8, 1839: "The fort here is the finest I have yet seen in the country and were the grounds not so swampy would be altogether a very pleasure place but the mischief is you cannot put your foot off the platform without being up to the ankles and the consequence is that the mosquitoes are so numerous that it is not by any means a rare occurrence that people about the place are obliged to turn from them and run for it to clear ground."



THE GENERAL DEPÔT AT YORK FACTORY

See p. xxxix, n. 2. The tree in front of the depôt was the tallest that grew at York Factory, and was one that Letitia Hargrave and her children tended until 1851. It died at the end of its life span of about sixty years.

■ *Photograph taken about 1900, and lent by Mr. George Ray.*

to this was the garden in front of the general depot, which had been built of soil brought from upstream and spread on a solid foundation of willows; but there was scant growth even in this better soil, owing to the fogs,¹ lack of sunshine, and raw cold winds from the bay.

In the rear quadrangle, behind the summer mess-house and at right angles to it, came first the clerk's house or guardroom, and next to it the house of the gentleman in charge. Across the quadrangle, facing these, were two important buildings, the provision store and the Indian trading-shop. In this section of the fort were also various other buildings, among which were workshops for the tinsmiths, coopers, and blacksmiths who manufactured goods for the whole Northern Department, an oil-house where oilcloths were made with whale oil for the cargoes, an ice-house, an office, and quarters for the trades-people and labourers.

When Letitia and the other passengers landed from the launch, they passed the large brass cannon that had boomed out a resonant welcome to the ship. These stood in an open space on the bank, two on each side of the front gates. The passengers went up the centre platform toward the general depot and separated before reaching it. The guests turned left to the guest-house, and Letitia, Hargrave, and the Finlaysons, who were to stay with them, turned to the right, and skirting the garden went past the summer mess-house and behind it, and so entered the back quadrangle. There, following the platform down the right side, they passed the clerk's house, and came to their own, of which Letitia gives such minute descriptions.

¹J. B. Tyrrell states that the fogs extend up the Hayes River for about forty miles inland, before the air becomes clear.

This house was a one-storied square building with centre door and hall. To the right on entering was the drawing-room, with the adjoining "pale blue bedroom" which the Finlaysons occupied during their stay. Off the hall on the left was the dining-room, used as the gentlemen's mess in winter. It was a big room lighted at night by an argand lamp.¹ Several large engravings in bird's-eye maple frames hung on the walls, and there was a mahogany dining-table, but the chairs were "country" made, and the floor was uncarpeted. A door at the back of the hall opened into a sitting-room, with a bedroom off it which the Hargraves occupied until the Finlaysons left in September.

Letitia probably wrote most of her letters in the sitting-room or drawing-room of this house. One gathers that the latter was unique at York, with its Kidderminster carpet, the mirror and sofa, the piano and table with their green covers, and the long curtains at the three windows draped and held by large sunflower curtain pins. Hargrave did his writing either at the large desk in his "writing-room" off the dining-room, or at his office. William Mactavish wrote his letters either next door, where he lived with the other unmarried gentlemen in Bachelor's Hall, or at the accountant's office in the main building.

The large kitchen in Letitia's home was deserted at this season. In winter she joined the gentlemen's mess, which was held in her dining-room, in order to save fuel, and because the gentlemen were fewer in number; but in summer she held her own mess there, and her meals and

¹A lamp with a circular wick, named after the inventor, Argand, of Geneva, Switzerland. This particular lamp, left at York in 1833 by Alexander Christie, was bought from him by the Company in 1834.



THE HARGRAVES' HOUSE AT YORK FACTORY

This picture, which was taken in 1931, has been lent by the Hudson's Bay Company. It shows the main door in the centre, and the door to the nursery at the left, which was added by the Hargraves. The building to the right is the clerks' house, or guardroom. The small square building to the left, and the other building behind were not there in the Hargraves' time. The Hargrave house was demolished in 1934.

those of the lady visitors were sent over from the summer mess-house by Houston, the cook, with Guilbault to act as butler. Guilbault also lighted the fires for Letitia in the mornings and evenings, for it was cold then, although she felt the heat at mid-day even in her thin mousseline dresses.

She was a figure of interest at York, with her personal maid, and the "showiness" of her fashionable gowns both out on the platforms taking the air and in her own home. It was the busy season, when York was crowded with all classes of visitors awaiting the ship, from the ladies and gentlemen in the guest-house to the men of the brigades and the Indians camped outside the pickets on the "plantation" behind the Hargraves' house. Letitia tells of entertaining some of the visiting gentlemen at dinner.¹ Though Murdoch McPherson, who had just arrived from a twenty years' residence in the north, may not have seemed to her sure of himself at table, he was nevertheless a gentleman. In fact, he was considered to have "a little of the dandy about him." Later, he had a fine home at Pictou, Nova Scotia.²

One of the first social puzzles in the country was presented by Betsy (a "squaw," to Letitia), who had had a number of husbands in the past, the last of which, Mr. Rendall, had recently returned to England. Betsy had been chatelaine of this officer's house within the fort, and she was a person of means, with a further choice in husbands waiting; yet Letitia found her in her kitchen as the family laundress! Hargrave had written Rendall from Norway House in 1837, "Remember me kindly to my old

¹See letter 25, p. 77.

²Murdoch McPherson to Hargrave, February 23, 1850: "It is one of the nicest residences I have seen in Nova Scotia . . . it will cost me £2000 a year to live . . . conformably to the style of the place—more than I can afford."

friend Betsy with one of your fondest Kisses. She is without doubt in my mind the best & most industrious Indian girl I have known on the coast. Now this is honest praise and no better than she deserves."

Letitia never accepted the social scheme in Rupert's Land, save outwardly and as necessary, and she was inclined to be critical. Mrs. Gladman was the only lady with her in the fort. In her, had Letitia but known it, she was meeting a member of the aristocracy of the country, the daughter and grand-daughter of early governors. She had been educated at a "Ladies School" in Red River among young women of her class; she had been brought up to appreciate her position; and she married a gentleman, George Gladman. The Gladmans sealed their letters with the family crest, and Mrs. Gladman used family silver. Yet, born and reared in the country, its elemental background and customs were hers. She had lived at isolated posts far removed from fashions, and she dressed herself and her children in what was available in the Company's stores. Later, however, when Letitia grew accustomed to externals and customs that were strange to her, she found Mrs. Gladman to be a woman of fine feeling and sturdy character whom she came to esteem and value as a friend. The house which Mr. and Mrs. Gladman built at Port Hope, Upper Canada, on their retirement a few years later, is one of Canada's lovely old homes, with spacious rooms, English in taste and style, in which members of the Gladman family still live.

Letitia's brother Dugald had been at York in 1840, but he had been obliged to return to the Columbia before the Hargraves arrived. However, Donald Manson, who had come to York with him and had remained to go on

furlough by the ship, gave them news of him; and Dugald had left a letter, which among others awaited their arrival. Letitia and Hargrave were soon busy answering these. There was one from "Uncle John," and among Hargrave's were two personal ones from Red River. The Reverend William Cockran wrote with advice for the newly married man. The other was from Thomas Simpson, just returned from the Arctic and fairly obsessed with the idea of heading another expedition to bring the explorations upon which he had been engaged to a successful conclusion. However, he had received no word from London on the matter, and he was on the eve of starting over the southern plains for England to press his suit personally with the Company. His letter to Hargrave was one of the last he ever wrote, and Hargrave answered it little knowing the tragic fate that had already overtaken his friend.¹ He wrote to him again in December, still ignorant of his death.

¹This letter was returned to Hargrave, and he laid it aside with an affecting little notation on it that they had "for years been as intimate as brothers."

Thomas Simpson's death the preceding June on his way over the plains to St. Peter's came upon them "like a thunderbolt," and Hargrave expressed strong doubt of the truth of the story brought to Red River by Simpson's companions. "The horrid fate of my poor unfortunate friend," he wrote to Hector McKenzie, "has pressed so heavy on my spirits that I can not even yet suffer my mind to dwell on it. God knows the truth of the tale." In other letters he expressed the same feeling: Simpson would not kill another unless it were to save his own life. However, he discreetly said nothing at York, and awaited the official investigation. For some unknown reason it was delayed until autumn, and Simpson's friends were dissatisfied at the outcome. The men concerned in the affair were of mixed blood; one was highly connected in Red River; and there was no course open to the Company but to accept their word: with an overwhelmingly half-breed and Indian population and no military support, they could do nothing else. The mystery of Thomas Simpson's death might not have remained to puzzle succeeding generations if a thorough investigation of the circumstances surrounding it could have been made; but, as in the case of the murderer, Ataswapah, in the Saskatchewan in 1841 who was sent to York and Ungava (see letter 31, p. 101.), and also in the case of the Sayer trial of 1849, when the Company's trade monopoly was dangerously threatened

William Mactavish padded about the fort, like the other gentlemen, in mocassins, and he and Hargrave were now busy from four-thirty in the morning until late at night, and spent many hours at their desks. Naturally, Letitia appeared in her husband's letters. He spoke of her to John Dugald Cameron as "a sweet & sweet-tempered young Lady, of a well cultivated mind & happy & cheerful disposition," and added that "both she and Mrs. Finlayson were agreeably surprised on reaching this by the superiority of our accommodations." Hargrave wrote to Robert Harding at Churchill that the ship had reached York on "the earliest date in 20 years . . . with a large import of Ladies—Mrs. Finlayson & Mrs. Hargrave, with Misses Allan & Ross who are presently deafening me by squalling around a piano of Mrs. H's insomuch that I can scarcely collect my ideas to the composition of this sheet." To Nicol Finlayson, who had turned over the charge of York to his brother Duncan on his arrival and gone to his own post, Fort Alexander, he wrote, "Your management here does you high credit & the Boat Slip, Platforms & preparations for the Launch House speak for themselves. All at Y.F. is in good order, & already plunged into the full tide of business." He replied to James Keith at Lachine, who had evidently been asked to solicit subscriptions from the Company's officers for "the Scotch College at Kingston," saying that "as an unworthy but zealous son of our Scottish Kirk" his help would not be "awanting," and he later subscribed five pounds. To their friend Mr. Loudoun of Glasgow he

(Morton, *Sir George Simpson*, pp. 202-3), the Company dared not risk the lives of the few white inhabitants by rousing any antipathies amongst the native people which might lead to the use of force. A conciliatory course, which to men accustomed to dictatorial powers must have been galling, was followed more than once in smaller matters as well, because of this inability to enforce any other.

wrote that Letitia was "quite delighted & surprised with the aspect of every thing," and went on, "The Indian squaws & their little girls especially attract her notice, and they nothing loth to acquire the favor of the 'Hockimaw Erqua' (literally Chieftainess) of the Factory are searching the forests in all directions, & every one returns laden with a variety of Berries destined to garnish our winter board with Jellies Jams Tarts & puddings. She indeed takes kindly to her new Kingdom and had I searched 'fair Scotland through' I feel firmly persuaded I could have found none so well fitted to make me happy & to be happy herself amid such deserts." To Letitia's father he related, "Since she landed she has (considering the peculiar state in which she now finds herself) thriven wonderfully. . . She declares herself agreeably surprised by the superior appearance & accommodations of this place to what I had led her to expect, & accuses me of having grossly libeled it." Of the voyage he said, "Our only drawback was the indifferent accommodations in a vessel not fitted up for passengers, but my Letitia bore all . . . with a patience & resignation truly admirable."

Letitia must have had some skill as a pianist. At least she was superior to Mrs. Finlayson, who, she said, could only play her own accompaniments when she sang, and in lieu of a piano was taking a guitar to Red River. There were enjoyable evenings round Letitia's piano while the Finlaysons were at York, and Hargrave later (with hopes of attending Council at Red River) wrote to Finlayson, "Please tell Mrs. Finlayson one treat I promise myself is to listen again to her song 'The Pilot' accompanied by the guitar."

The Finlaysons left for Red River on September 1. The ship sailed on the sixth, and the other visitors

gradually departed. The gentlemen's mess moved to the Hargraves' dining-room in October, and the winter routine began. With the arrival of snow, Letitia was intrigued by the new experience of driving in a carriage wrapped in the fine musk-ox robes that Hargrave had procured for her from Churchill.

By December all were busy again with letters for the southern express, which left early that month. Hargrave reported the activities of the fort. He told the Governor of facing the banks in front of the factory with stone against the inroads of the river, but predicted "an arduous and unremitting struggle with it for the safety of the foundations of the factory itself." He wrote to Alexander Christie of the thorough cleaning of "every old drain around the place," and of "extensive new drains cut from all the mens' houses," and said that those cut around the new magazine, which was now complete, had "drained the swamp in which it stood." "Sloops Creek," he went on, "formerly being found useless in spring, we have cut a channel into the old Factory Creek better sheltered from the ice, which . . . promises to be a place of security to one of our schooners. A new Launch house has been set up & is ready for boarding in." The old magazine had been put behind the tallow store to serve as "a Tar and Pitch shed, while the foundations for a new Outlook have been dug & filled up with frame work ready to build upon next season." He added, "In provisions we are well stocked, 37 casks of Geese from our own Hunts last fall, a fair supply of the same from Severn, a ration of pemican, another of Dried meat & a third of partridges." Thus assured of a plentiful larder, he wrote to his district officers at Churchill and Oxford House, Robert Harding and Richard Grant, inviting them to spend the coming

holiday season at York. This made a pleasant change in winter, and from the business point of view was a valuable personal contact for all parties.

James Hargrave's letters, copies of which are preserved in his private letter-books, form an enlightening background for Letitia's letters.¹ Many of his correspondents were officers Letitia herself knew through their yearly visits to York; but even to others he naturally mentioned her welfare and their home news. He sometimes related incidents of which she said nothing or touched upon lightly. Hargrave had a wide correspondence. As head of the chief depot of the Company he conducted much business through letters to heads of districts and to others. Furthermore, in addition to every such "public" letter he usually wrote a second one marked "private." In the latter he gave news of other districts, of Canada, and of other countries; and he soothed ruffled feelings, explained regulations that had caused resentment, and gave encouragement, hope, or sympathy as needed, even though through many years he was far from content with the conduct of the Company's affairs himself. His letter-books suggest the large part that the extra effort of these "private" letters must have played in welding the Company's personnel into some semblance of unity and loyalty.

1841 The spring of 1841 was one of the worst ever experienced at York; and the time when Letitia expected her child was approaching. In the "awkwardness" of the late spring, as described by Hargrave to John Lee Lewes,²

¹A difference in form will be noticed in James Hargrave's letters quoted throughout the book. The appendix contains both original letters and those copied from his letter-books, in which every letter he sent off was first written out completely, except for abbreviations to save time and labour.

²See appendix, pp. 283-4.

1 LETTERS OF LETITIA HARGRAVE

there was real danger to low-lying York. Residents in later years tell of a sudden thaw in the Hayes River bringing down huge blocks of ice that piled up forty-five feet high on the banks in front of the Factory, menacing the fort itself. The incident that Dr. Nevins relates about the ice may have occurred in 1841,¹ since some further information he gives was obtained from Letitia. Yet of such alarms in her new life Letitia said little. In fact, she seems to have shown real heroism with regard to physical trials and ill health. In a country where even an officer's wife would not delay the Company's Brigade with which she was travelling for more than a day for the birth of her baby, Letitia evidently found no one around her with Old Country ideas on such matters, except Dr. Gillespie. Both she and Mrs. Finlayson might have been suspected from the letters of harbouring the prevailing Victorian idea that ill health was both interesting and ladylike, as well as a flattering subject of conversation. A psychiatrist might have been needed at Red River to cure Mrs. Finlayson's constant headaches; but when Letitia faced grim realities at York she came through the ordeal creditably. Her child, a son, was born on April 1. She seems always to have been grateful to Dr. Gillespie for his care, at this and at other times when she needed his services. She was no less grateful to Mrs. Gladman, whose continued kindness she never forgot.

¹Nevins, *Two voyages to Hudson's Bay*, p. 37. "One year there was extreme danger from the accumulation of ice a little above it [York]. The alarm was given one night, by ringing the large alarm bell, that it had actually begun to sweep over the bank, and all the people rushed out of their houses, half dressed, in the utmost fear. Had the danger proved real, probably not one would have remained to tell the tale. All would, no doubt, have been swept away. As it happened, however, it was only a small piece, which having broken off, had fallen upon the bank and given rise to the opinion that the whole mass was coming down. In a day or two the ice broke up at the mouth of the river and all was hurried to the sea without having occasioned any damage."

Hargrave's heavy labours began early that year; and throughout the summer he was away from his family, he said, for eighteen out of the twenty-four hours. One morning, when writing to Donald Ross, he said that it was 6 A.M., and that he had just left his baby asleep, to rouse up his old friend Donald. The Inland Brigades now began to arrive, and the summer "campaign" began. The population of York increased with visitors of every type, from the men of the brigades to those who came to go "home" by the ship.

One of the most welcome of the arrivals was Dr. Tolmie from the Columbia.¹ He brought news of Letitia's brother Dugald, and he was a gentleman of cultivated tastes and wide reading, whom the Hargraves found congenial. Heavy duties had been set for him by Council, in superintending the packing of the furs while he waited to go on furlough by the ship. Despite this, and the fact that all the Red River returns came in that year dripping wet, and had to be dried, he seems to have found time to support Hargrave's efforts for social improvement at York. This, it seems, was needed. Nicol Finlayson, after leaving York, had written to Hargrave of his unsuccessful attempts to rid it of hangers-on, and had expressed a hope that Hargrave would be able to "clean out this Augean stable." In so far as rules and regulations went, Hargrave had done all he could in this direction. Isolation had a great bearing on customs, but Hargrave tried earnestly to cope with the matter in his district. At York he was authorized, as an officer in charge of a post, to issue a civil marriage contract, binding only in the country.² The best he could do about

¹See letter 31, p. 102.

²See appendix, pp. 286-7.

a marriage at a remote post is shown in his instructions to Cromarty at Churchill;¹ and further efforts are shown in his instructions to Robert Clouston at Oxford House.²

It may be said of the union of the Company's officers and women of the country that many of these marriages proved to be permanent. In such cases the Indian girl or half-blood was naturally intelligent and rose to her opportunity, and there was mutual love and esteem. The husband was able to train the wife to preside over a gentleman's home and to rear the children for their father's station in life. Some instances of such marriages might be cited. Chief Factor John Dugald Cameron, brother of the secretary of the Upper Canadian government of the period, took to wife a young Indian girl. In his absence from his post during a time of famine, she kept the people of the fort alive with soup made from every living thing she could find or snare, even to mice. She grew to be a woman of fineness and dignity, as those who knew her recall, and as her portrait shows. On her

¹Hargrave to John Cromarty, March 16, 1841: "I observe what you say about David Bird having taken to wife the daughter of Mr. Ermatinger. As he is a decent man, and a good servant I can have no objection, to permit of this arrangement provided he signs the enclosed papers consisting of a promise of marriage in duplicate—one copy so signed to be given to the young woman or to her mother; the other is to be forwarded to me on the first opportunity to this place. This being done you will receive her into the fort and furnish her with the customary rations given to mens wives."

²Hargrave to Clouston, December 10, 1841: "I see you will have to take strict measures with Miss Poukie John, to get clear of her. She must either go with her sisters or take a husband—and on no account allow her to return hither to be a burden on her poor mother. She has a strong desire to get into the Forts and so far as I know her character, she may be deserving of such admission in the character of a wife—but in the absence of a suitor from among our servants she cannot longer be allowed to hang about our Forts where she is sooner likely to become a Piece of a wife than a legal one. The young woman who arrived last summer from Lac la Pluie must also be sent off with her father, an Indian, who I understand is in your neighborhood. Old Moar is no relation of hers and therefore cannot receive her into his family again."

husband's retirement she travelled with him and lived happily among his people in Canada. Nicol Finlayson's wife was of half blood, and the Reverend James Evans wrote of her, "Mrs. Finlayson is a very fine little woman, the daughter of a former Governor of the Hudson's Bay Territory. She is half Cree but speaks excellent English and is quite the lady."¹ Thus the true picture of these gentlemen's "wives of the country" is not altogether as the novelist paints it, that of a squaw cowering under her shawl. Many of these women, when given the opportunity, became ladies in their own right.

To Letitia, however, the situation with regard to mixed blood continued to be an enigma although through her uncle, John George McTavish, she had long known that loose forms of marriage and morals obtained in Rupert's Land, especially in the more remote places. She slightlyingly dubbed as "Half-breeds" two people whom she had never seen. One was Jane,² the daughter of old Roderick McKenzie of Isle à la Crosse,³ who since 1830 had been in charge of the English River District. Roderick came with regularity to visit the Hargraves, who were very fond of him, and no one was more welcome in their home. "Captain McKenzie of the Nipigon," as old Nor'Westers called him, had in his youth at that post taken to wife Angélique, the daughter of an Indian chief, by the simple method of carrying her off, though they were married later when opportunity offered. Old people along the Red River, to which settlement the McKenzies retired, recall Angélique as a lady who was highly regarded. Her portrait shows that she dressed with elegance; and

¹See Fred Landon, "Letters of the Reverend James Evans" (Ontario Historical Society, *Papers and records*, vol. xxviii, p. 62). See letter 26, p. 87.

²See letter 52, p. 206.

³See letter 36, p. 127.

her daughter Jane was a quiet ladylike girl who was at the Red River Academy for years, first for her education and later as a teacher. The second person of whom Letitia spoke slightly was Dr. John Bunn of Red River,¹ who was educated at the University of Edinburgh, and who is remembered still as one of the finest gentlemen who ever graced the medical profession in what is now Winnipeg, Manitoba.

There is no doubt that the Hargraves welcomed in 1841 the aid of Dr. Tolmie, an earnest Christian, and that of the Reverend James Evans,² in the campaign for better social conditions. Evans evidently inaugurated some religious training and services at York, in addition to those which Hargrave had been conducting. As a rule, the clergy gave the Company too much trouble,³ with their demands on transportation, and with their criticisms of the policies of the Company, to be in high favour with them. This attitude was indicated some years later by George Barnston, of Norway House, who wrote to Hargrave, "Our friend William [Mactavish] of York Factory, appears to prefer seclusion to the Society of the long Robes, what would he have felt last summer at this place with five of the sort at a time flitting about him. Ross's plan was a good one. He donned the Night Cap, and took his Roast Duck quietly in his own room."

¹See letter 39, p. 144. Dr. Bunn's residence, Victoria Cottage, retains its original Red River atmosphere, and is the country home of Dr. Burton Stewart of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

²See letter 22, p. 59.

³Donald Ross Papers, Simpson to Ross, December 15, 1851: "The missionaries are troublesome people to deal with, though it may not do to let it be known generally. I think we should endeavor to neutralize the evil by encouraging all sects indifferently. Then, such is the characteristic humility and charity of missionaries at the present day, as sure as one sect breaks with us, all others will stick by us, and turning upon the accusant, will fight our battle."

But with regard to Evans,¹ Hargrave seems to have been his friend and to have enjoyed his society, even later, when he deprecated Evans's lack of judgment in his relations with the Company. Letitia, however, ridiculed the gentleman at first, and spoke flippantly of him later; but she appears to have thought well of him. She does not appear in such a good light with Mrs. Evans. She was, as Miss Ramsay has said, "sensitive, witty and intelligent . . . with a keen eye and a sharp tongue."² Her sharp tongue was, however, mostly a pose, used often to conceal her real feelings; for her actions were far from what her words would indicate. She may not have seemed tolerant, though she had to exercise much tolerance at York; but she was tender, as her husband's comments show, at every turn. She was kind to all about her. Wilson, the manager of the workmen, whom she ridiculed, adored her for her kindness to him, and the simple good-hearted William McKay and his wife, of Island and Trout lakes, could never forget her goodness to them through many years. She understood women of her own class, such as Lady Simpson, Mrs. Finlayson, and those among the wives of the clergy whom she considered well reared, and she enjoyed their society. She also came to understand and esteem the ladies of the country, such as Mrs. Gladman, Mrs. Christie, and others. She was, however, the product of the class distinction in which she had been reared. Prejudice sometimes led her to estimate others unfairly, as in the case of Mrs. Evans, who, with a bit of religious snobbery, she

¹Hargrave to McDougall, July 4, 1842: "He [Evans] of all missionaries that have visited this country is in my opinion the best calculated to do good among the poor aboriginies."

²A. A. W. Ramsay, "Letters from Letitia Hargrave" (*The Beaver*, June, 1940).

labelled a mere Methodist. Yet she and Mrs. Evans had a common taste in music, and Hargrave that summer ordered for her a piano exactly like Letitia's.

In spite of mixed blood, however, class distinction in the Company and in Rupert's Land in general was strong. If the husband were the head of a post, it was the aristocracy of the country whom the wife met and entertained, whether she were Indian, half-blood, or white. She had to live and dress to suit her position, and to be at ease in it. No doubt her social position as "first lady," with its implications and requirements, and the military régime of Company life, contributed to the transformation of the Indian wives. The consequential position of the "first lady" in the life of the fort amazed a visitor to Norway House as recently as 1906. He said that tradition was still so strong in Company circles that if the wife of the officer in charge had been a queen she could not have been treated with more deference and ceremony.

A certain standard of life was observed at the posts. Prominent officers usually had personal servants, and serving-men were trained for the officers' mess. Table service was important, and heads of districts usually had their monogrammed silver, and plate chests, and there was crystal on their tables. Donald Ross complained to Hargrave of the fragility of the crystal, saying, "A man can almost blow the bottom out of tumblers and as for the Wine glasses a person half seas over might easily swallow Glass and all without knowing any thing about the matter." Angélique McKenzie's monogrammed silver is hallmarked 1830, and the silver tea service that graced her table at Isle à la Crosse is now in the beautiful Toronto home of a descendant.

One of the arrivals at York in the summer of 1841 was Mrs. Turner from Norway House. She had been Mrs. Duncan Finlayson's servant, and had been dismissed upon landing, the previous summer. The Reverend James Evans had taken her into his service, and had tried to reform her, but without success. She was now returning to England by the ship, and was threatening to sue the Finlaysons for full wages from the time of her engagement, but Hargrave managed to make a satisfactory settlement with her for his friends. He complained to Donald Ross, however, "Aye, you have sent a fine specimen of morals in your export of the Madam Turner. I wish the ship would come were it only that I could get rid of her—also I fear there may be heads broken for her yet, before she leaves. In a flame colored gown, she flounces at all hours through our men's houses, and if it does not set something else on fire, 'tis neither her nor its fault."

The summer dragged for Letitia, in spite of the added happiness in her child. The southern packet, expected early in April, had not arrived, and so much could have happened at home in a year! Their stock of reading, Hargrave wrote, "had, between the sea voyage and the long winter evenings become as familiar as household words." On July 2 he wrote to Duncan Finlayson, "My wife and the little one are prospering exceedingly and we would at present require nothing to add to our happiness, except to hear from home, for which we are still waiting with all the fortitude and patience we can assume." The packet arrived eight days later, and Letitia's mind was set at rest. All was well at home.

On July 26 the baby was "made a Christian of" by Mr. Evans, with Mrs. Gladman as his godmother. His

name Joseph James, was, fashionably, to go through a succession of variations with his mother in the years to come, first as Beppo, then Doi Dame (his own attempt at his name), and later as Doch, Doey, and Joe. Hargrave wrote a tender letter to his aged father about his little namesake, and later one to Mrs. Gladman, then in Red River while her husband was on furlough, about her "bully of a god-son."

Ship time approached. It was the highlight of the year at York. The extensive "plantation" beyond the fort was crowded with tents, almost daily augmented as further brigades from inland arrived. The Red River brigade alone consisted of nearly thirty boats, and there were private Red River traders' boats as well. In the usual routine, the sound of the approaching ship was caught by the ears of listening Indians on Point of Marsh and quickly reported at the fort. The launch from the fort carried an officer out to the ship, who presented instructions to the captain from Hargrave to deliver to him the Company's letter-bag, packet-box, and those cabin passengers who wished to come ashore. The launch took out also presents of milk, fresh-caught fish, and "Sallad," which meant anything green available from the gardens at York.

The Company's two new ships, the *Prince Rupert* and *Prince Albert*,¹ arrived on August 18, 1841, and the heaviest part of the summer business was from August 21, when they anchored, until they were "cleared out" on September 11. Night and day men worked at the unlading and lading² of the ships, to make the most of the

¹See p. 69, n. 1.

²John Ryerson, *Hudson's Bay: or, A missionary tour in the territory of the Hon. Hudson's Bay Company* (Toronto, 1855), pp. 109-10: "At 1 o'clock, on Tuesday morning, the schooner returned from the ship with a full cargo, when



JOSEPH JAMES HARGRAVE
From a photograph lent by Mrs. J. H. Schofield.

short shipping season. September 20 was the latest date allowed for a ship to leave, no matter how late in August she arrived. The activity was tremendous, as the cargo was unloaded and taken to the stores, and the country returns were taken aboard.

The stores were veritable hives, and hundreds of men, the Indians bare-footed and bare-waisted, swarmed over the fort and down to the boats on the river, all eager to get their cargoes, stow them away, and be off with their brigades. The Red River brigade had brought two oxen and three buffalo, which at least had been able to walk over the numerous portages; but on the return journey the men had to carry over the portages an Old Country gig landed from the ship for Andrew McDermot, the Red River merchant. Among other freight was "upwards of 30 Tons" for the clergy of the country alone.

Hargrave and William Mactavish hardly slept until the ships were away again. It was always a matter for congratulation when, in all the activity, no serious accident occurred. Hargrave had said of the turmoil when it was over, "the echoes of the storm still linger, my lugs still ache with the uproar," and he warned Donald Ross to "be prepared for a band in full cry upon you." In trying to prepare papers and write a letter for a departing brigade, he wrote, "Upward of a hundred voyageur tongues are clanging in my ears joined to the creaking of bale presses, the rattling noise of hammers and all the other discordant sounds of a crowded depot."

Letitia's one opportunity in the year to enjoy com-

immediately all hands, who could find room to work, were employed in unloading and conveying goods to the store-houses. It is surprising with what activity and order the men . . . work. The schooner is one hundred tons burthen, and she was fully loaded, but the whole cargo was discharged, and in the store-houses before seven o'clock in the morning."

panionable or interesting visitors was in the midst of this hubbub. At the same time, if there were other guests who annoyed her, the hubbub intensified her trials. There was no relief at night, since noisy jollifications went on at the tents. It was all sore on her nerves, for being confined to the fort in summer she could never get away from the noise. Both her own and Hargrave's letters for the ships were always written amid this din.

The passengers who came by the ship in 1841 were the Reverend and Mrs. Cowley, Mr. Roberts, and Chief Factor Charles, all for Red River, and Gavin Hamilton and R. M. Ballantyne as clerks in the Company. Ballantyne gives an excellent description of people, scenes, and events at York at this juncture in his *Hudson's Bay*. Mr. Roberts proved to be an eccentric, and Hargrave wrote to Duncan Finlayson, "Mr. R. is a genuine Welshman, a true *Cadwallader*, also filled with a mania for preaching, & seizes the opportunity of our worries to give us sometimes a sermon of an hour and a half's duration, bearing about seven heads each and having from 8 to 10 horns & garnished with doctrines uses and applications innumerable." Gavin Hamilton was the orphan son of a friend of Hargrave's youth,¹ whom he had found the previous year in Scotland being educated by public funds. Though he saw him but briefly he had befriended him by getting him into the service. Gavin was only now arriving, and Letitia gives in detail his career in the fur-trade. He was a great disappointment from the first; even his appearance and personality were against him.² He was to prove, as Hargrave wrote to

¹The Reverend G. J. Hamilton, Ashkirk, Hawick, Scotland.

²Robert M. Ballantine, *Hudson's Bay; or every-day life in the wilds of North America during six years' residence in the territories of the Hon. Hudson's Bay Company* (4th. ed., London, n. d.), p. 5: "Mr. Wiseacre, [Gavin Hamilton], was

Sir George later, when he finally recommended his dismissal, "one of the Company's worst bargains."

Ballantyne was destined during the next few years to become the despair of those under whom he served, because of his inaptitude for figures and business.¹ Could they have known, he was doing something of more value than their figuring, more enduring than all the business he could not grasp. Of little use to them, he was absorbing what he was later to use in a lasting portrayal of their period and their country. Even this, however, they held in poor esteem.² He was a cousin of Lady Simpson,³ who had given him a letter of intro-

nothing! He never spoke except when compelled to do so; never read, and never cared for anything or anybody; wore very long hair, which almost hid his face, owing to a habit which he had of holding his head always down; and apparently lived but to eat drink and sleep. Sometimes, though very rarely, he became so far facetious as to indulge in a wink and a low giggle; but above this he seldom soared." (The above is not in the edition cited elsewhere).

¹William Mactavish to Hargrave, Norway House, June 8, 1842: "Mr. Ballantyne will be sent out to manage the R.R. business at York this summer, I think myself it would have been a better joke, since they are determined to have a farce, to have sent out, either Mr. McKenzie's or Mr. Finlaysons coat and trowsers stuffed with straw." Donald Ross Papers, Ross to Simpson, August 15, 1842: "Young Ballantyne is not capable of managing it even for one day, and to leave it with him . . . would throw the business . . . into inextricable confusion."

²John Siveright to Hargrave, Edinburgh, March 18, 1848: "Young Rob^t Ballantyne who left the service last summer and who is now a Writers Clerk in Edinburgh, published a volume 'Hudsons Bay' or 'Everyday Life in the Wilds.' I subscribed for two copies as Mr. Charles & Campbell were doing the same—thinking there would be something entertaining in it and as he had carefully avoided naming individuals,—must say however am sadly disappointed as it is a caricature and misrepresentation throughout. Mr. H[argrave] is however rather favorably noticed—and is well written—at least say those most competent to judge." Donald Ross Papers, James Anderson to Ross, August 12, 1850: "I have finished Ballantynes work & will leave it as you desired with Mr. Hunter—it is the work—apparently —of an amiable young man—with a strong perception of the Ridiculous (vide the Dinner scene at Gravesend-) but void of originality & vigour in a rather remarkable degree—His Every day life in Hudsons Bay was easy enough—I wish he had seen some of my every day life for many Years—"

³See letter 29, p. 99.

duction to Letitia. Thinking it would be pleasant for Mrs. Finlayson to have her cousin at Red River, Hargrave sent Ballantyne on to serve there, and the young man related Letitia's kindness in outfitting him for the journey. "I was much indebted to this lady," he wrote, "for supplying me with several pairs of moccasins for my further voyage, and much useful information without which I should have been badly off indeed. Had it not been for her kindness, I should in all probability have been allowed to depart very ill provided for the journey to Red River."¹

Hargrave was soon busy with letters for the ship. He wrote to the Governor, congratulating him upon the honour of knighthood which had been bestowed upon him that year. Turning to other matters, he said that his work that ship-time had been the heaviest in fifteen years. Ironically, the next letter Hargrave received from Sir George, while on his world tour, read, "You, I am told are getting quite corpulent, so much so, that one would suppose 'your days of hard grinding in the Stores' are now over, and that the management of York and its affairs has become a perfect sinecure."

Hargrave wrote also to Margaret Dunnet's father of her exemplary behaviour "both as a servant and individually." He went on, "Both Mrs H. and I consider her more in the light of a part of our own family than as a mere hired servant, yet far from presuming on such treatment her behaviour is ever marked by the greatest attention obedience and anxiety to discharge her duties. . . She has a room in our quarter of our house apart from the men servants in the kitchen."²

¹Ballantyne, *Hudson's Bay*, 2nd ed., p. 25.

²This kitchen was built separately behind the house with a passageway leading to it. The menservants' bedrooms opened off the kitchen.

With the long winter evenings in view, Hargrave wrote asking his friend John Loudoun of Glasgow to purchase for him a list of books.¹ He also ordered from the Company in London some dried yeast, saying, "as from our not having a Baker and the sedentary lives our duties cause us to live, I fear the badly leavened bread we use may induce a return of our dyspeptic complaints."

With the departure of all visitors, the fort settled back into the usual routine. The few weeks' holiday, now given the gentlemen to camp out and hunt at Point of Marsh as they wished, was not only an enjoyable interlude, but it was looked upon as a necessity, to enable them to recuperate from the heavy labours of ship-time, and to prepare them for the confining winter at their desks twelve hours a day.

Writing to Duncan Finlayson in December, Hargrave told of activities at the fort after the ships left. "Goose hunts Fisheries &c," he said, "were fitted out, Boats hauled up, Launches taken to pieces and the Schooners dismantled & laid up for the winter. I last spring had had enough of the Point of Marsh and after some tough labor I got a dock dug for one of them by clearing out the old Factory Creek to the depth of about 6 feet. The *Frances* is accordingly laid there and the *Jane* in Sloops Creek, in which I trust they will be sheltered from all risks of spring ice." He told of building a new fur store, thirty by sixty-five feet, and of repairing the others. He said the prisoner Atasawapah, the murderer who had been sent from Saskatchewan, was "closely confined & employed in picking Oakum . . . at which the poor

¹"Rose's Translation of *Orlanda Furiosa*, Percy's *Relics of Antient English Poetry*, Washington Irving's *Astoria*, Cowpers Translation of the *Illiad* & *Odyssey*, The *Subaltern*, Bracebridge Hall, *Arabian History*, Translations of Euripides, Herodotus and Levy."

creature works away very steady & every Saturday delivers up his full weight by scale." He commented to Alexander Christie upon the poor returns in furs, and said, "Regulations have been established by Council to counteract the growing exhaustion of the country & to draw *still more* tightly the bonds of economy."

Hargrave had cheered himself with the prospect of attending Council at Norway House in 1842. In the previous summer he had given way to Gladman, who had attended its sittings at Red River. Now, however, he told Finlayson "I had cherished hopes of being able to see you next spring at Norway House, but our friend Sir George writes . . . that he sees no necessity for my so doing . . . so good bye to the hopes I had of getting out of these fogs for a few weeks." But even so, York had changed for him. As he explained to Angus Cameron, "This desert is now clothed in a sunshine formerly invisible to my eyes." Toward the end of the year he wrote to John Macallum of his happiness in his home, saying, "Since winter closed in we are passing through it in the old way. The Counting House and Depot fill up with duty the whole of the day, and a corner of the night—but as the clock points eight I shuffle off care in a pile of Schemes Invoices Indents &c. and clear my brain from the wrinkles of business in an hours romp with my little boy. I thank God that he and his mother alike, are thriving." He wrote to Ballenden: "Mrs. H. is perfectly contented amid these frozen regions—and what with music, cards or conversation our winter evenings are now a heavenly contrast to those you and I have known here."

1842 In 1842 the routine at York continued as usual, except that there was for Letitia a longer and more trying wait

for news from home, and for Hargrave increasing difficulties in his work. Letitia was so close to her men-folk's daily life in business that the heavy toll it took of them both had a depressing effect on her, as her letters sometimes show. But Joseph James lightened care for them all, a joy heightened, no doubt, by the barrenness of life about them. Hargrave described him as "a blue eyed little rogue, pride of his mother's heart" and the "sunshine of my days." He related to John Macallum, "He and I have many frolics together when the cares of the day are shut out, the parlour lighted up and the curtains let fall." He went on to mention the child's constant companion, a setter called Rose: "Their morning salutations are laughably amusing, I trust however that a few months will bring him fresh company, better fitted, in time, to romp with a young gentleman."

To his aged father, now eighty-seven and blind, whom he often thanked for the religious instruction he had received in his youth Hargrave now wrote, "I pray . . . I may also be enabled to tell my children and my children's children of the only sure refuge of the soul and assure them, as you do, of my faith and trust in the mercies of the Father through the merits of the Son. . . I send you a lock of his fair curled hair . . . that you may *feel* something that has been part of another plant, that springs from the parent stem." His father had sent injunctions about the child's upbringing, and Hargrave replied that he had read them to Letitia "who with tears . . . on her cheeks, desires me to assure you that the study of her life shall be to bring your grand child up in the way he should go. I may add, she is well qualified to do so, both from her gentle mind and strong religious feeling." Donald Ross thought it time the child should grow up,

and sent along some kindly advice. "We are sorry to hear," he wrote, "that Mrs. Hargrave is not quite so strong as could be wished . . . I am quite proud of the description you give of our little hero — at the same time I would suggest that it is full time to draw the young gentleman's attention to the 'Porridge Pot' and 'Pap' as the only legitimate source from whence to draw his daily food. I have had a good deal of experience in the matter which leads me to believe that continuing the 'Breast' beyond nine or ten months is not only injurious to the mother but to the child also."

Letitia remarked this spring on the impressive size of everyone in the fort, except herself and her brother William;¹ but Rupert's Land was characterized by many people large in both girth and appetite.² Governor Simpson remarked in 1836 that John George McTavish was "reduced in weight to about 5 cwt." Frank Ermatinger wrote in 1847 that McTavish still "could not get his vests made out of remnants." Barnston described McTavish in 1846 sparring jokingly with another heavy-weight, Cuthbert Cumming;³ and John Rowand and

¹Letter 33, p. 111.

²On the occasion of Alexander Lillie's marriage to Harriet McDermot in Red River, two couples stood up to dance whose combined weight totalled 1,372 pounds. John Rowand junior "turned the scales at twenty-five stones, whilst James McKay weighed twenty-six stones; Mrs. McKay (Mr. Rowand's sister) turned the scales at 24 stones; and the bride's mother (nee McNab) weighed 23 stones; equal to 1,372 pounds avoirdupois." See Roderick Campbell, "Alexander Lillie" (*The Beaver*, October, 1923, p. 16).

³George Barnston to Hargrave, April 12, 1846: "Last spring I accompanied our worthy Bourgeois 'that was' John George McTavish to Sword's [Montreal] that Haunt of Northwesters, and found Cummings the 'Noble Burgundy' seated in all his breadth and Majesty, on the Hall Bench, a perfect picture of ease and contentment. As soon as we entered, with great agility, he squared up to John George, and set himself in Boxing attitude, seemingly jealous of the honor of rotundity being contested with him. You would have laughed to have witnessed the graceful movements of these sparring Birds of so like a feather."

Donald Ross were also noted as being very large men. Hargrave himself grew to considerable proportions,¹ but he reduced and "had a waist" again, later in life.

A nursery was being built that year, in anticipation of the Hargraves' second child, and they were already envisioning little Joseph James going home to school. It was hard to contemplate York without him. Letitia began to steel herself to meet a situation that she would have made any personal sacrifice to avoid, but she knew the boy must be sent home for his education. Hargrave wrote to his sister's husband, James Ross, about Joseph's future, "The only difficulty with my situation is in obtaining a proper education for my children... My dear wife is, however, from her superior education and habits, admirably fitted to rear and superintend the opening mind of infancy, and as soon as it may become necessary... I shall send him to his grandfather in Scotland."

Hargrave's labours had been increased in 1841 by the loss of three efficient officers, Gladman, Lane, and Philpin. This left to him and William Mactavish the whole concern of the depot, and William had a severe attack of scurvy. There was much need too for experienced workmen for tasks in hand, among which was the completion of the much-talked-of lookout. Daunais, Hargrave's one good builder, had already been requested for work at Norway House. "The only one who could hold a tool," he protested to Duncan Finlayson, "and besides he won't go to Norway House and live on rations of fish alone, as they do there."

Hargrave also had personal concerns. He was now forty-four years old, and was thinking more seriously

¹See letter 50, p. 197.

than ever about his future and his growing family responsibilities. He had been twenty-two years in the service, in charge of York for ten of these, and he felt his services were not being rewarded as they deserved. He outlined his feelings about it to Duncan Finlayson. He said that his hopes of promotion, given sincerely in 1840, had received a chilling frost in the Company's resolution to promote no chief trader for the present, and he added, "I will however add to you that toiling as I now do, and more heavily burdened than any predecessor I have known here, I avoid despondency only by trying to think as little as possible about the matter." His work that summer grew ever more difficult. When William had gone to Council, he wrote to Donald Ross desperately, "I stand alone in the Depot Fur Store and Ration Room, and unless I am furnished with some help soon, the result may be guessed at. . . I will again fall down beside my duty here as I have once and again done already."

The business of the year was deranged by the loss of "a red cassette" from the Sault Packet, which contained the *London Express* and nearly all the Hargraves' private letters.¹ "Poor Letitia is in low spirits," Hargrave wrote to Duncan Finlayson on July 18, "for want of tidings from home." She was concerned too about rumours that Mrs. John George McTavish had died, but she received no letters until William returned from Council on July 1, and brought her one from her mother. There were no letters by the ship, but the red cassette, found at last,

¹Hargrave to Harding, July 20, 1842: "We have this season been much annoyed by one of our Canada Packet Boxes having been left at Ft. Alexander by that blundering Chief Factor Allan McDonnell. It contained almost all our letters and among others those of Their Honors to you. I have sent off an Express to Norway House for it but it will not likely reach us before the end of the month."

brought other letters on August 7. One from the Sheriff carried news that Flora, Letitia's sister, was ill. It would be months before they could hear further news of her, and the Sheriff's letter was ambiguous: "Letitia will feel for me under the trial of Flora's illness. My bodings are more despondent than Mama's, but Dr. Harvey and McFarlen assure me there are no urgent indications of danger to life."¹ Hargrave replied that they were upset about Flora being ill, and uncertain as to the seriousness of her condition. He thanked the Sheriff for the herrings, bacon, and oatmeal he had sent, commenting that the last item was "held sacred to Joseph James who is really fond of it and bullies the poor maid servant each morning till he can get hold of the spoon."

Letters confirmed the death of Mrs. John George McTavish, and Hargrave wrote to her husband sending their sympathy. In addition he gave him family news, with comments. "William," he said, "gets through his drudgery as General Acct. with great credit to himself considering the small complement to which we have again been reduced here. He is quiet and unobtrusive, yet spirited." Of Dugald he wrote, "I wish he were under a different Bourgeois as I do not expect that his merits will ever be done justice to by his present one."

Two visitors of interest came to York that summer. One was Sir George Simpson's secretary, E. M. Hopkins, who had left the Governor in California to continue his tour of the world through Siberia, while he came to go home by the ship. He brought much news of Letitia's brother Dugald, which she then retailed in letters home. The other visitor was Augustus Peers, who came by the

¹Dugald Mactavish senior to Hargrave, June 11, 1842, a letter in the possession of Miss Letitia Macfarlane.

ship as a clerk in the Company, and brought letters of introduction from both Lady Simpson and her father. He was a young man of engaging personality, an acquisition to the depleted group of gentlemen at York, and he soon became a favourite in the Hargrave household. His subsequent career was a tragic one. He was shortly sent to the Mackenzie River District, and some years later died there. His wish that his body should not rest in that frozen region, and the story of the difficulties encountered in implementing it, form one of the pitiful dramas of the North.¹

Coincident with the establishment of the mission at Norway House by the Reverend James Evans, Sir George Simpson had given instructions that the rules for the observance of the Sabbath should be strictly kept. At that time also issues of grog to servants and Indians were discontinued in the District. The results were now beginning to be seen. Hargrave told Ross that instead of rum his Indians were now given the new regale. "Your Indians arrived on the 9th," he said, "and delivered their cargoes. They have had exactly the same regale as the Oxford ones, and appear to be well pleased with it — 1 lb. sugar & 1 pint molasses, 2 oz. Tobacco and a pipe on arrival." He informed the Reverend James Evans: "The officers who visited the depot cooperated most cordially with me in restricting the sale of it [spirits] and all have experienced the beneficial results. Our business was got through more quickly, regularly and expeditiously—the health of the people has been better, and even the poor fellows that used to indulge in the abominable practise of intoxication, frankly owned to us 'that they were much

¹See "Statement of Roderick MacFarlane" (*The Beaver*, September, 1939, pp. 12-15).

better without it'." He reported to the Company's secretary in London on the Reverend James Evans's work at York: "We have had the pleasure of a visit of about two weeks duration, this Autumn from the Revd. Mr. Evans, whose ministerial labors have been prosecuted here to the manifest spiritual advantage of both Natives and Servants of the Honble. Coy. Public instruction with prayers were regularly delivered every evening to numerous congregations and the attendance on the Sabbath days was usually as full as our public Hall would contain." He also told of their evening school, through which every apprentice in the fort could now read and write; and spoke of William Anderson,¹ one of his tradesmen, who had taught in the school for five years without any remuneration.

The Reverend Mr. Evans's tin canoe, which he built at York that summer, caused considerable comment. Hargrave wrote to him later that on his departure from York he had feared for his safety "from the very ticklish character" of his canoe, and said that they were relieved when no word came of any accident. Donald Ross wrote to Hargrave, "I would not even cross the river in that *Tin Machine*, no, not for all the gold it could carry. It has been remade here, and now looks like a canoe, but it will never be a safe craft." The late Henry Gladman of Lindsay, Ontario, a lad at Oxford House at the time, recalled being in a brigade which included Mr. Evans, when the new tin canoe was pierced by a rock. Not having his solder and soldering iron along as usual, Mr. Evans had to abandon the craft for the time being.

¹William Anderson became a chief trader and was in charge of York in the late eighteen-sixties. He was the father of John George Anderson, Bishop of Moosonee from 1909 to 1943.

However, he later travelled many thousands of miles in his tin canoe and the Indians, seeing it flashing in the sun, named it "Island of Light."¹

Letitia remarked that among the passengers for England that September were two "half-breed" youths who had not been brought to call upon her, so she concluded they were not genteel. How right she was, is a matter for conjecture. One of them was Alexander K. Isbister (1822-83),² who was to become a noted son of Rupert's Land. He had already had four years at school in England, had just graduated from the Red River Academy, and was now on his way to the Old Country to continue his education.

In his "country" letters that fall, Hargrave wrote to thank Duncan Finlayson for the onions he had sent, but grumbled that Donald Ross had helped himself to some as they passed. He said his supply of butter was short, that casualties were high among the eggs, and that they had no turnips in the garden at York because the wrong seed had been sent. However, they had salted down for winter eight kegs of turnip tops. He applied to Chief Factor John Harriott of the Saskatchewan District for a few kegs of marrow fat from the plains, as they had only common tallow in which to fry their reindeer meat. And lastly, he wrote to tell Gladman how much they would miss "the affectionate assistance" of Mrs. Gladman in the "coming family event."

¹E. R. Young, *Apostle of the north* (Toronto, 1899), p. 243.

²In England, Isbister later championed half-breed rights in Rupert's Land, and he had a career of some eminence as an educationist and author. (W. S. Wallace (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Canada* (Toronto, 1936), vol. iii, p. 286). He never returned to his native land, yet his name is a familiar one there through his bequest in the interests of education in Manitoba, known as the Isbister Scholarships. The bequest now provides sixty-four awards.

By November the year's outdoor work was ended. The fur stores had been repaired, a new one built, the river banks from the factory down to Sloops creek reinforced "by a solid stone embankment against spring floods," and the two schooners were safely laid up in the two nearby creeks, which had been deepened and widened for that purpose. December arrived, and York was "pushing on through fogs of business and hoar frost," while Letitia and Hargrave awaited the birth of their second child. Hargrave admitted to Duncan Finlayson that Letitia was "rather nervous." He delayed the Southern packet day after day, hoping to have good news to send to Kilchrist House, but on December 10 he could detain it no longer, and sent it off. Only a few hours later messengers ran to overtake it with a letter from Hargrave to the Sheriff. It told of the birth of a second son, "a fine stout rogue," and of a delivery without accident; and added that Letitia, who was well, said to "tell Lady Simpson and Mrs. Webster the news."

The Hargraves' joy in their second son was, however, shortlived. The first grief of their married life came through his death less than three weeks later, on December 27. Letitia's letter to her mother on April 1, 1843, graphically describes the birth of the child and the tragedy of its early death. Behind her words one feels the depths of her suffering, when the little form that had lain warm on her breast was consigned to the frozen wastes of York.

1843 Letitia was ill during the early part of 1843, after the bereavement. She was indeed much shaken by it for some time; and she expressed very truly the effects of grief when she said she felt herself "so changed within."

Her anxiety about her sister Florence's illness was so great that when the Sault packet arrived on April 9, and she saw Flora's handwriting among the letters, she was left shaking from the reaction. She had stayed in her own rooms until spring, not having the courage to attend the gentlemen's mess. Then the Hargraves moved temporarily to another house, which they shared later with the Gladmans, in hopes of getting their own repaired with what workmen could be mustered. Daunais, the carpenter, had been sent to Norway House after a second request from Donald Ross. The sacrifice had been made with a poor grace. Hargrave wrote to Ross:

With much and great inconvenience to myself I have at once yielded to your urgent request for Daunais & he started with the 1st Saskatchewan boats—4 days after I received your letter. I have been living in a barn (the Govr's old Summer House) for the last seven years, where during the winter the water in the wash-stand jug regularly freezes each night by the stove and when the North blast blows, the candle blaze by the bed sends streams off horizontally like a fiery pennant. This I had endured so long rather than attend to my own comfort, while Goods or Furs remained exposed in ruinous stores to damage, & now when I could with a safe conscience have got my Lodgings improved it would be hypocrisy for me to say that I yield without reluctance. I see and can imagine much more the annoyance you must suffer from your present inmates and so will try and weather out another winter of denumbed nights rather than be instrumental in keeping your tongue in purgatory.

Some changes were expected among officers of the Company in 1843. Encouraged by Duncan Finlayson, Hargrave had previously made his usual appeal to the governor to attend Council, where he could push his own cause personally among his friends. In case he should not go, he had cited to Sir George his long and faithful service and had urged his case for promotion. On April 1

he sent a second letter strongly urging his claims to await the Governor at Red River when he came to hold Council. By the tenth, however, he had received a letter from Sir George promising the long looked for chief factorship this year; a letter which altogether changed his outlook on life. His years of waiting were over. He replied the same day, "I gratefully thank you for your words of comfort . . . My mind is now perfectly tranquil—with your guiding hand on my fortunes I have nothing to fear." Sir George's tour round the world had made some stir, and Hargrave went on to congratulate him on his safe return from "the most arduous and successfully accomplished of *all* Travels undertaken by Englishmen. You have long been known in this country as the first of Voyageurs—your late splendid performance has now made you known as such to the world."

Council was held on June 10, but Hargrave's name did not appear in the promotions. He had no blame for Sir George, who had been overruled in the matter. The factorship had been given to Archibald McDonald, whom Letitia labelled "an old useless man on the Columbia," and who was thus rewarded, through Lord Selkirk's influence, for services to his father in the Selkirk troubles of 1812-16.

This blow, added to their child's death, and followed by the heaviest summer's work in thirty-six years, seems to have initiated a downward trend in the Hargraves' content at York, even though promotion came next year, and they were yet to know much happiness there.

It did not help the situation that at this juncture Hargrave's enterprise in building the lookout came in for sarcastic criticism from Sir George, whose psychology in administration might sometimes be questioned. It had

been built not far from the Hargraves' house and painted black, and Letitia, as well as her husband, had been impressed with its usefulness. Sir George wrote to Hargrave from Red River:

I am told the establishment of York is in very high order. Had I been enabled to spare time, I should have taken a run down this season. . . . You talk of the economy of your buildings; I am disposed, however, to think that there is rather a waste and misapplication of labor, otherwise we should have had no such erection at York as a look-out I hear of, which is described as the wonder of the age in the building way,—the nearest approach that has been seen to Beckwith's famous look-out at Fonthill, and which to be plain with you some of our witty friends have named "Hargrave's Folly." That is what I call luxurious smoking, at 200 feet above the level of the musquitoes; I have no doubt that a glass of Madeira and water, or a foaming tankard of Brown Stout are very delightful in mid-air—Hopkins says so, having experienced a little luxury in that way with a jovial clerical friend of his on the tower of St Olave's Church in London.

To this Hargrave replied with what calm he could muster.

I regret that your leisure did not permit you to honor us with a visit this summer. . . . Such a visit would have shown you how some of my witty friends had, in their imagination, converted my poor Look out, of less than 40 feet, to a perfect tower of Babel 200 feet high. The history of this affair is shortly, as follows.—The roofs of the new Depot being too slant to be ascended in most seasons, without danger to life and limb, a means to descry the arrival of the ship had formed a portion of the projected improvements consequent on the re-building of the old Factory; and in spring of 1841 when for want of materials to commence a repair of the dilapidated Fur Stores, the carpenters would in a great measure have been idle—I seized the opportunity of a spare month and a few logs procured at French Creek that same winter and got built our present modest and useful Look-out. . . . Its real use to the concern will be best understood by the fact that by aid of it last month we were enabled to perceive that our schooner had, after her

first attempt to sail to Churchill, been stranded on the eastern coast toward Cape [illegible] in the same dreadful storm which destroyed the Beacon. We were enabled by [illegible] immediate & powerful assistance to get her off shore without material damage—but without this means of observation we would have, in all likelihood, remained in ignorance of her fate till both vessel & cargo, perhaps crews, might have been beyond the reach of rescue. As for Madeira or Brown Stout in mid air, I must confess my “foolish” pate had neither conceived nor aspired to such sublime ideas, altho I believe they must be very *recherché* in this way, yet it is more than likely, my indifference to excitement, will never allow me to try the experiment. . . .

For the first time in her letters home Letitia now spoke of feeling melancholy at the thought of staying on for years at York. She said that though she was as well pleased with it as at first, yet she was now so only from deliberately not thinking.¹ Yet she did not add the burden of these feelings to those burdens her husband was already carrying. When he wrote to Alexander Christie about their child’s death, he said of Letitia, “In spirit she now bears up wonderfully and even under the bitterest period of her trial I had the consolation . . . that not one expression was dropt from her indicating a wish that we should leave the station where we now are, or that a visit to her friends would tend to relieve her spirits.” Later in the year he wrote to her Uncle John George McTavish, “She is still the same happy equal tempered and contented creature that I had first found her, since we first met, and from what I can observe, the thought of when we shall be enabled to leave this place seems not to give her one hour’s uneasiness.” Letitia’s grasp of their situation is shown this year in her prediction that they would not be moved from York until

¹See letter 39, p. 146.

lxxviii LETTERS OF LETITIA HARGRAVE

her brother William was able to succeed Hargrave.¹ No doubt she often heard the ability of the different officers discussed.

Hargrave seems to have done what he could that summer to divert Letitia. He took her sailing; and, on the arrival of the *Prince of Wales*, he arranged a visit to the ship in company with her surgeon, young Dr. Kellock, for whom Mary Clarke had formed such an admiration. Mary Clarke's arrival probably did more for Letitia's spirits than anything else. Mary was a woman of about forty-six, who came direct from service at Kilchrist House. In Letitia's employment she was serving a third generation of the family, since she had begun in the home of Letitia's grandmother, Mrs. Lockhart; and she was to continue in the service of the Hargrave family until her death, long after that of Letitia and James Hargrave. Mary not only set Letitia's mind at rest about the seriousness of Flora's illness, but she cheered her with all the intimate news of home.

Another interesting visitor was Lieutenant J. H. Lefroy, who came to be outfitted for his journey across the country in the interests of magnetic research. Fresh from Lachine and Sir George ("the toughest looking old fellow I ever saw"), he wrote from York, "Nothing can exceed the kindness and hospitality shown to strangers in this country."²

In June the Gladmans had sent the Hargraves from Oxford House a little Indian girl to be trained as a servant, whom they promptly named Nancy. She arrived with her brother, who was also to work at York so that she

¹See letter 39, p. 143.

²J. H. Lefroy to the Reverend A. Lefroy, July 24, 1843 (From a letter in the Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa).

would be more contented. By growing up in the surroundings in which she was to serve, before she had contracted bad habits, she could be more easily trained. In thanking the Gladmans, Hargrave wrote, "The girl has been enstalled in the nursery with young Joseph James, who having *examined her all round* at length scrambled up to her shoulders and they are already as intimate as two young puppies."

An Indian called Abbis Shabbish, who had murdered some of his countrymen, and had threatened the whites, was reported this summer as killed by one of his own people. Letitia made no comments, but it seemed that she related the murderer's end with relief. As usual, she managed to use a serious matter as news for her letters, but with a light touch that caused no uneasiness to the reader. She had shown the same faculty before in writing about the "religious phrensy" that for two years had been unsettling the Indians. There had been a grave threat in it, and the matter had called for careful handling by the Company's officers. Hargrave's instructions to Cromarty, in charge at Severn, and the letters of H. H. Berens, one of the Company's directors in London, show the situation to have been critical. One false move on their part, and the forts of the whole district might have been wiped out.

Hargrave still had an anxious eye on his delayed factorship. When he wrote to John George McTavish on August 6, congratulating him on his recent marriage, he added "I am deeply grateful this season to learn both from you and from himself that Sir George purposed recommending me to the vacant Factorship, both as now I have a prospect of providing properly for my family, and because of the present depressed news I had of my

fortunes . . . £1000 [lost] with the unfortunate Norway Speculation.”¹

During the summer of 1843 there was the usual shortness of certain provisions until the brigades from the Red River Settlement appeared. Though Red River butter and flour were usually of indifferent quality, this year they seemed improved. The Hargraves had also had the luxury of twelve jars of yeast from England the previous autumn. Red River supplied casks of eggs, cabbages, and onions, to vary York’s monotonous fare, but there was a high casualty rate in eggs due to the hot weather and rough handling on the trip. This year, out of six casks containing a hundred and twenty-six dozen, ninety-three dozen were “crushed and useless.”

Sir George’s idea of sending a Russian to initiate the use of Russian stoves this year was not popular.² Though Hargrave wrote dutifully that when the Russian came on to York from Norway House, he would give him every assistance, yet to Donald Ross he had written, “I agree with you about Russian stoves and trust that the stand you have made will save us from being choaked by fumes of charcoal.” There is nothing to show that the Governor’s expensive enterprise of sending this Russian to posts across the continent ever bore any fruit; though it would seem that he was in this matter more progressive than his officers, since they could have learned much from the Russians in the way of living comfortably in frigid weather.

Hargrave’s cares were indeed heavy this season. The Athabaska papers were missing, owing to the packet men having been killed and eaten by some starving natives of

¹See letter 41, p. 160.

²See letter 39, p. 147.

Fort Good Hope. The rivers were unprecedentedly low, and this retarded the brigades; sickness had broken out amongst the servants at York, and Hargrave and Mactavish had "scarcely any rest night or day," in getting the brigades "cleared out." To Duncan Finlayson Hargrave related that the season had been one of "violent thunder storms and chilling fogs alternately," which had "reduced the fort to a hospital and one half the efficient men are on the doctors List."

On the eighteenth of July there was a violent electrical storm, and the beacon on Point of Marsh was struck by lightning. It was so completely demolished that it was impossible to obtain its dimensions from the remaining fragments. Replacing it before next season now presented a new problem. Hargrave wrote to Nicol Finlayson how thankful they were that the fort had escaped "when lightning was falling all around us—the woods on the south side of the river opposite the Factory having been set on fire . . . during the same dreadful night." This must have been a terrifying experience for Letitia, with the added danger of the powder magazine being so near.

William Mactavish's health seemed a matter of much anxiety to both Letitia and Hargrave. Ballantyne, who had come back this summer, was William's only assistant, a useless one, who even yet could only copy papers. William therefore worked "most part of the night as well as day." "Ballantyne is a fine lad," wrote Hargrave to Donald Ross, "but as unfit to be *his* assistant, or any assistant in a Counting House as to be an Archbishop of Canterbury . . . Mactavish is pale, without appetite, and worn to a shadow"; and he said the summer's work William had done was "cruelty to lay on the shoulders of

any one man." Letitia noted that William did not recover as quickly as usual after ship time this year, and was unable to eat with any appetite until November.

- After the ship's arrival on August 10, Hargrave expressed his feelings strongly to Donald Ross about the work put upon them at York through the large quantities of freight
- ✧ that had arrived for the Red River Settlement. He considered himself an officer to serve the fur trade, not the Settlement, and had always resented the latter's heavy demands. He said they were working night and day to get the ship unloaded, "a tremendous task, choaked as she was to the Upper hatch with packages for Red River, both public and private account. The share the trade has in its own vessel is indeed so small that in a few years we may be considered intruders in a bottom, paid out of our own
 - ✧ pockets. There is a growl for you—in equitable acquital for a morning spent in trying to find room and almost in vain for the pyramids of packages addressed to McDermot, Sinclair, Thomas, Mowat & a legion such names. I tell you what it is, if my labors are thus to go gratuitously to our well nursed colony, you may just appoint another trader to look after the offices of the Trade . . . for both are too much for one pair of shoulders."
 - ✧ By September another anxiety kept them sleepless at night: the schooner *Jane*, sent to Churchill on August 7, had not been heard of, and no word came that year. They learned later that she had been wrecked in thick weather and heavy gales north of Churchill six days after she set out.

1844 The Hargraves were apparently more content in 1844, as the prospect of Hargrave's factorship seemed "as

sure as a promise can make him";¹ and it duly came when Council met that summer.²

The gentlemen had extraordinary good luck in their shooting and trapping at Point of Marsh that year. Hargrave related that they were "making a grand coup with the foxes . . . the beautiful snow white lady like article—some of the gents have got dozens in one night—this I encourage as there are scarcely any natives left on this coast." This was because of the migration to Norway House and Red River. He said the gentlemen's traps were "fast filling our houses with bundles . . . from 10 to 20 are frequently caught by us in one day and night—and all this without neglecting in the slightest degree the routine of our every day duties." It was a late spring, and in May there was not one case of sickness in the Factory. June brought a short return of winter when the ground was covered with snow, and all outside work was at a standstill while it lasted.

The missing schooner *Jane* had been found a total wreck. They were able to salvage much from her cargo; but wood for a new boat to replace her had had to be found that winter along the denuded coast, as well as material for a beacon ninety feet in height. The wood for the beacon reached Point of Marsh in June, and every type of workman about the place, even to the captain and men from the schooners, was put to work on

¹See letter 46, p. 183.

²Simpson to Hargrave, June 3, 1844: "Permit me to offer you my warmest congratulations on your promotion to a Chief Factorship." Same to same, June 15, 1844: "I am quite sure that your altered position in the Service will in no degree affect your conduct toward those with whom you have to deal, nor induce any relaxation of your habits of industry. I only regret that it did not take place in better times when your interests would have benefited more rapidly by the promotion than they are likely to do in the present depressed state of the trade."

the new structure, under the direction of Daunais, who had come from Norway House for the purpose.

After the meeting of Council the news came that Duncan Finlayson was being posted to Lachine, and Hargrave wrote how much they regretted his leaving Red River, "which is just at our door compared to Canada." Alexander Christie replaced him. "The choice of your successor," Hargrave wrote, "is a good one, for besides yourself and Christie, the Trade has scarcely another officer who would have sufficient tact to control and influence that buzzing hive of Red River, more filled with wasps and drones, than bees." This was proved to be true, on the whole, after Christie retired. "Letitia is no less impressed with a sense of loss," Hargrave continued "as she and Mrs. Finlayson naturally have so much in common. She is the only one in the country to whom she can write unreservedly. Between ourselves, I find my health the last two years, more shaken than I have hitherto observed it. From the climate and food we have to subsist on, my digestion is much impaired and my appetite gone, and frequent attacks of land scurvy warn me that I am trifling with my constitution. But I am yet as poor as a rat, and my family increasing, so I must venture something to provide for those whose sole dependence I am." He informed Finlayson that for the second time Red River had sent the wrong turnip seed, which at York would produce only tops. Their gardens had given them nothing except salad, he said, and they would have to do with salted turnip tops once more for winter.

In a public letter to the Governor in September, Hargrave made a complaint that Gladman, who came to York each summer to take charge of the packing of the

furs, had been detained the past two springs at Norway House, so that he did not arrive at York until a late date in July. Hargrave asked that, should he come next year, a better arrangement be made. Each season, he said, over two thousand packages of furs were delivered at York before Gladman's arrival, with no one there capable of attending to them. Consequently, packages of furs that were wet had not been opened, with resulting damage. There is no doubt that great inconvenience and loss were caused when Gladman tarried at Council at Norway House in 1842, and in 1843 relieved Donald Ross to enable him to attend Council at Red River. Further than that, it might have been natural for Hargrave to feel that if Gladman were available to do this for Ross, who always attended Council, why could he not be sent to York instead, not only to pack furs, but to release Hargrave, who never had the opportunity to attend Council? Hargrave's public complaint was purely a question of business administration, but unfortunately Gladman took it as a personal affront. Letitia felt this keenly, though it was only a passing cloud, and made no difference to the friendship between Mrs. Gladman and herself.

William, worn to a shadow, was obliged to go on furlough this year, and Letitia busied herself getting him ready. From the first, Hargrave seemed to recognize a superior mind in William, and he now wrote to John George McTavish:

My young friend William is indeed the most fit from his ability and information to be placed in this charge so soon as I . . . get out of it. His acquaintance with the whole process of Genl. Requisitions and Outfits for the Trade is in theory as intimate as my own, while in the Genl. Accts. of the country there are none

superior to him. I stuck the longer and more willingly to my post to afford him time to be known & to establish his foundations. He is however wrought out just now with the heavy duty which the Govr. has ever laid on the clerks of this depot & which is now more heavy than I have ever seen. . . . Gladman is to have the books at Oxford Ho. this winter & I get through the routine without one that knows an idea beyond a copy book. William's merits are indeed of the first order & I the more cheerfully agreed to his home trip this fall as it will necessarily make him known to Sir George who I believe has scarcely ever yet seen him & on whom his modest gentlemanly and intelligent mind is sure to make an impression and be of service in presenting him for promotion in which position, both from talents labor and length of servitude he should now stand in the 1st rank.

Letitia's brother Dugald's first visit to York since she came made the summer of 1844 a happier one. Her letters show her love for both William and Dugald, but very different characteristics endeared them to her. Reading between the lines, it would seem that Dugald was the favourite. He was a handsome man, with nothing of William's retiring nature, and he seemed to be very popular among his fellows. Hargrave had told the Sheriff that there was praise on all sides for Dugald, and said, "One of our old Factors who saw him last year at Vancouver, assures me that he has clearer views and sounder opinions regarding our business than any man now in that Department."

Letitia appreciated William's sterling qualities. He had high standards, and could excuse nothing lower in others. He seemed to hold few people in high regard, yet, like Letitia, what he said did not always express his real feelings, nor chart his course of action. He could not, like Hargrave, cheer himself by looking at the best side of any trying situation. He took a gloomy view, yet never spared himself in trying to better it. His grand-

niece, Lady Grierson of Edinburgh, described him as "a sensitive melancholy Highlander of fine tastes, easily depressed, though never giving in." But he had none of his brother Dugald's charm of manner or buoyant disposition.

Letitia's letters lead us to a better understanding of William when later he was governor of Rupert's Land. His long years of unremitting toil at York, the inadequate diet, and the trying climate all no doubt had a part in bringing him so early to the closing scene of his career. It seemed doubly tragic that as a dying man at Red River he was to summon his last strength to struggle helplessly with the culmination, in the insurrection of 1869-70, of the storm he had so long watched brewing.¹

The position in the Company's service for which Letitia's brother Hector had been fitting himself had, through influence, been given to someone else; and Hector came out in the summer of 1844 to John George McTavish at Lake of Two Mountains. Hargrave wrote to the Sheriff, "As Hector has missed the appointment in the service which was intended for him, I think he could not have done better than to visit Canada. He will get a warm welcome from his uncle who will look after his interests."

The Sheriff was now asking that Joseph James, not yet four, should be sent home to his grandparents; but his father said he could not "rob his mother of him yet," and added that in a few months he hoped there would be an addition to their family of which he would advise him by the December packet. Hargrave also wrote to his own father about Joseph James. "Though little more than three years," he said, "he now repeats kneeling at

¹See G. F. G. Stanley, *The birth of Western Canada* (London, 1936).

his Mama's lap the Lord's prayer, & at our family meals asks a blessing on our daily food with all the guileless simplicity and innocence of childhood."

When the ship arrived in York Roads on August 11, 1844, the new beacon was in readiness. Hargrave sent out the usual present of milk, fresh fish, and "sallad" to Captain Herd by the officer who went out for the mail and cabin passengers. The Reverend and Mrs. James Hunter, sent by the Church Missionary Society to found a mission at Cumberland House, were the only arrivals outside of Company people. Letitia seemed to enjoy Mrs. Hunter's stay at York more than that of most people who came, and she was sorry to see her start off on the long trip to the life of hardship which she knew awaited her.

Sickness again appeared at York that summer, as it did also at Norway House; but fortunately Letitia had but a slight share of it. After Margaret Dunnet's departure she had the family sewing to do; and when the ship and its consequent visitors had left, she spent a busy autumn. It was now the holiday season for the gentlemen, and Hargrave wrote to Gladman at Oxford House, "All our young fellows are off with the doctor to the marshes, and Wilson and I are like two old crows, flitting about the lonely platforms."

It was this autumn that Hargrave recorded the rules for fire prevention that were posted up at York. Letitia mentioned at different times Hargrave's great fear of fire, that dread menace to isolated posts; and she fully shared his anxiety, especially in winter. If the fort were wiped out at that season, there was little chance of survival for anyone.

On October 24 a daughter was born to the Hargraves,



LETITIA LOCKHART HARGRAVE, OLDER DAUGHTER OF JAMES
AND LETITIA HARGRAVE

From a photograph lent by Miss Letitia Macfarlane.

and the December packet carried the good tidings home to Scotland. But Letitia did not, as before, make a good recovery. She was under the doctor's daily care for some time, and it was New Year's Day before she was able to go out of doors.

In her letter of November 24 to her mother about the baby's arrival Letitia mentions a special Express that had come from Red River. It brought instructions for Hargrave to build boats for the Arctic exploring expedition, which the Company was sending out the following spring under Dr. John Rae.¹ The request upset Hargrave, Letitia said, as he had two schooners of his own to build that year. Nevertheless, he wrote to Dr. Rae assuring him of "every assistance and co-operation." He said also that he had collected certain necessary information and had drawn a needed map for him and "would build the boats according to the draft now received."

1845 Hargrave spoke of the early months of 1845 as being pleasant and happy in their home. The new baby, Letitia Lockhart, who came to be known as "Tash," was thriving, and there was general good health at York. In January Hargrave ordered new robes for Letitia's carriage from Harding at Churchill, saying, "musk-ox calf skin would of course be the most lady like material." To John Macallum he wrote in March, "Since I last wrote you . . . no matter of the slightest interest has arisen on the tranquil horizon of our life here. . . . We all continue to enjoy that best of the Almighty's blessings, *good health*."

Inevitably, the Hargraves had begun to consider their position. After being now nearly five years at York,

¹See letter 49, pp. 191-2.

they appeared to be, as Hargrave later expressed it, a fixture. This feeling resulted in his decision to ask to be removed from the post. He felt that his health was being permanently injured. In earlier years he had written courageously of York and its climate to William Mactavish, saying, "It certainly tries the stamina of a man more than an equable and temperate climate but with adequate aid in the performance of duties there, no Scot who has made a bed among the heather with no cover but his plaid and no shelter but the leaside of a hill, need fear a Coast fog more than a Scotch one." The years, however, had proved conditions to be different; and Hargrave had not found adequate assistance for the efficient performance of his duties. His business responsibilities were growing heavier each year, and he felt a continued indifference to the situation on the part of the "galloping governor," who, it was generally considered, was never long enough in the country to learn at first hand the conditions set before him at Council. Hargrave voiced something of this dissatisfaction to Alexander Christie, now governor at Red River in Duncan Finlayson's stead. "Should Sir George another season not allow of my seeing him at Council I trust that he will at least find time to make us a visit, an honour which we have not received I believe since 1834." He went on to say that when Council met, Christie would be the only one there that "cares a button about us and our affairs," that "Sir George himself has really not time to read all the mass of papers which pour in upon him during his few weeks among us, and since we must do our business here on paper, you are my last hope, my sheet anchor."

It also rankled deeply in Hargrave's mind that no

opportunity was ever made for him to attend Council. He was kept at home like "a bad boy" even now, when as a chief factor he had more than ever a right to sit at the Council table and have a voice in the Company's affairs and policies. Yet there is no doubt that above all business reasons, above anxiety about his own health, the decisive factor in bringing Hargrave to his momentous decision was his family's welfare, and especially Letitia's reluctance to face even the thought of Joseph James going so far away to school.

On April 1, 1845, therefore, he wrote to Sir George—but humbly. It would seem at times as if Hargrave was lacking in spirit; but he knew his autocrat! If displeased, Sir George could post him off to the Arctic tomorrow—and he would go! Letitia mentions the case of Dr. Todd;¹ and this very year Gladman had no recourse, when ordered across the Rocky Mountains with his large family, but to resign.² Hargrave's letter to the Governor was as follows:

My own health this season has been tolerably good, yet scorbutic symptoms return on me. . . . Our family affairs throughout the season have been most fortunate and with our present good health and content we spend our lonely days most pleasantly. I could have wished to have had some personal conversation with you relative to my future plans, but as this is not likely soon to take place, I will take the liberty to mention some of them on this occasion.

In 1847 my eldest boy will be in his seventh year, and as it my warmest wish to give him a good Scottish Education, I would wish to send him home that season in charge of his mother and with her all the rest of my family. My own motions are of course entirely at your disposal—yet should it by that time suit your plans to allow

¹See letter 37, p. 135. Dr. Todd was not sent into exile as his friends evidently expected at this time.

²See letter 51, p. 202.

me a charge nearer to the civilized world where I could again enjoy the society of my family, you would deeply gratify me. At that date and should Providence spare me that long, I will have spent nearly 20 years of my life in this dreary place, one half of which I have managed its affairs. Such a term of servitude I trust will weigh somewhat in your mind, and to your appreciation of it together with your long tried kind feelings towards me personally, I leave this my private petition.

It was only after Hargrave had thus informed the Governor that he wished to be relieved of the charge of York, that permission was finally given him to attend Council the following year. John Ballenden, on hearing of Hargrave's application to Sir George to leave York, wrote, "I am not surprised at you wanting to get rid of York. I am only astonished that you should have remained there so long. The very name gives me the Colick and the worst news I could now receive would be that I was again to winter there. How Mrs. Hargrave could become reconciled to such a place I cannot imagine, and were it only for her sake I really wish you snug quarters in a more congenial climate."

Little dreaming of the long years ahead at York, Letitia began cheerfully to speculate on where they would be sent; but in the meantime she got Hargrave to ask the Reverend James Evans to come and christen the baby that summer.

The spring packet brought to Letitia the tragic news that her promising young brother Hector had been drowned. He had been given a clerkship in the Company on his arrival in Canada the previous autumn, and had gone to Tadoussac to serve under Hargrave's old friend, George Barnston. Letitia's own words describe the pain and suspense she suffered in the ensuing months until the news was definitely confirmed at the end of June.

Food was not plentiful in this summer of 1845. Hargrave had said in March to John Macallum, "Altho' our fare is meagre and destitute of the grateful addition of vegetables, yet we have learned contentment with our lot—altho' I will not deny that a garden of R. R. Turnips and Cabbages would add an additional ray of cheerfulness to our countenances." He had asked Alexander Christie for the loan of five chests of Congou tea, saying, "the demand for tea and sugar has become general and so clamorous that Council will have to set bounds." He had complained of their Red River butter the previous year as being "abominable—the consistency and color of lime mortar," although later he reported one good keg; but by August of this year they were completely out of that commodity. He wrote to Alexander Christie on June 19, "We . . . are bare enough of *Grub*, the spring goose hunt has turned out badly and altogether the provisioning of the depot is one of my most anxious thoughts. The eggs cabbage and cheese are excellent—16 doz. of the first out of 60 having been found broken. . . . The onions had all run to sprouts and tops so the loss is almost total. . . . The potatoes were capital."

William Mactavish arrived back from Scotland on July 5, and Dugald a week later. Their company was most welcome to Letitia, after the loss of Hector. Hargrave had commented, "She was much afflicted, for she loved him dearly." William had travelled to New York with Sir George and Lady Simpson, who were on their way to make their home at Lachine. The Governor remained in New York for a few days, while the rest of the party came on to Canada.

Letitia spoke of the Duncan Finlaysons being annoyed at the Governor's intention of spending the winter with

them at Lachine;¹ but as it proved, his plans were to make this arrangement for a longer term. This was no doubt with a practical eye to Lady Simpson's need of her sister, and to his own use of Duncan Finlayson, for the two families lived together until Sir George's death. The only relief the Finlaysons had was in the frequent winters they spent in England when Sir George was at home in Lachine.²

There were some changes on the staff at York in 1845. R. M. Ballantyne, whom Letitia calls "Bobby," had to leave on account of poor health, and the butler Guilbault too was leaving, much to the Hargraves' regret, for though Letitia railed at his frailties, she was really fond of him. John McLean,³ thoroughly disgruntled after twenty-five years in the service, was retiring, and coming out from Mackenzie River. The Governor had ordered Hargrave to detain until August 10 or 12 one of the express canoes for Montreal, in order to take McLean to Canada. At the appointed time this canoe carried

¹Finlayson to Hargrave, April 15, 1845: "The Gov. is coming out bag & baggage, that is wt. wife, bairns, servants &c. & how we are to stow them all here is more than I know. I do not wish to anticipate evils but one thing is to me almost certain—that neither our wives, our servts. nay, even our own selves, will pull together in the same direction, and, under the circumstances the weaker must give way. I, therefore, expect to receive notice to quit these quarters, before another year comes round." Lady Simpson's delicate health and her consequent need of her sister's help with an undisciplined family was spoken of later by George Barnston's sister Mary, who came from England as governess in the Simpson family.

²Donald Ross Papers, Finlayson to Ross, Lachine, April 30, 1852: "My further movements are somewhat uncertain. . . . I think it is likely that I shall soon quit the service. This laudable intention is strengthened by the determination our mutual friend has come to, of remaining here for some time to come, which is contrary to the understanding I had on the subject when I last left England."

³See Morton, *Sir George Simpson*, pp. 252-6; and W. S. Wallace (ed.), *John McLean's notes of a twenty-five years' service in the Hudson's Bay Territories* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1932).

Guilbault from York, picked up McLean and his wife, Clarissa Evans, whom he had recently married at Rossville, and then called at Norway House for Ballantyne, who had been waiting there a month. He describes in his *Hudson's Bay* his travels to Norway House and in the express canoe to Canada.

Hargrave's letters at this time graphically supply the background for Letitia's bright letter to her mother of September 5, and illustrate the trying circumstances under which she sometimes wrote, and of which she herself said little. To begin with, Hargrave had no sooner got rid of a severe cold which settled on his chest in spring, "from the changes of this abominable climate," as he wrote to Roderick McKenzie, than influenza was brought to York by the Red River brigades; and by the middle of July the whole establishment, including himself and his family, was down with it. By the end of July the worst scurvy that Hargrave had ever seen "in his reign" had broken out, which medical opinion ascribed to the poor Red River flour. Their bread was "sour and unwholesome," he told Donald Ross, adding "I am still toddling about and my poor man Wilson has crept out of bed to help me." The influenza had by this time spread so widely amongst servants and Indians that the fort and plantation was "one large hospital with almost all work at a stand." By August Hargrave and his family were recovering, thanks to Dr. Gillespie's care. Besides his heavy medical duties the doctor "had outfitted all the brigades from the shop."

On August 19 Hargrave reported to Ross, "the sickness on this coast is still dreadful. . . . Indians are all sick on the voyage, and can hardly travel. My poor wife is confined to bed again and I am as you may believe a man of many

cares. At this moment were it not for the bustle that surrounds me I would have a sore heart from many causes. . . . We are out of butter—the flour is poison—the fish are few—our fishermen all sick and York mess at present fares on salt geese and Red River beef—happily this last is excellent.” He told James Douglas that they were “impoverished for goods and deluged with wants and demands”; and he reported to Duncan Finlayson that the stock was so low he had not had “such a scramble to outfit brigades since 1827.” By the end of August he was “literally smothered amid brigades of boats,” and crowded by settlers waiting for goods from the ship.

Letitia tells of Margaret Sinclair, the daughter of William Sinclair, coming to stay with them for the winter. Her father had been posted to Churchill; and as John Rowand of Edmonton had asked for Margaret as wife for his son John of Fort Pitt, Sinclair wished his daughter to remain in a convenient place to be called for. It seems that this visitor was not altogether welcome, as the Hargraves’ home was small and already crowded. However, Hargrave recorded two bright gleams at this time. The first was that Letitia, woman-like, was much cheered by a new bonnet sent her by Mrs. Clouston of Stromness, of which Hargrave wrote to Mr. Clouston, “I have not seen her so much gratified for some time.” And the second was when he learned he was at last to go to Council. He wrote to Ballenden, “I have been so long chained by the leg to this place that I have come to look on myself as fully fixed to it as a part of the Depot—judge of my glee then at a summons to attend Council next spring at Red River.”

It was no doubt with mixed emotions that Hargrave saw Gladman retire this year. They had not been

getting on smoothly, but Hargrave respected his ability and wrote to John George McTavish, "The Service loses a most efficient officer. . . His talents were of a superior order and I hope he will be able to find a field for himself in Canada."

Ballantyne tells in his *Hudson's Bay* of meeting Dr. John Rae between York and Norway House. Rae had spent the summer in Toronto learning to use the scientific instruments needed on his coming Arctic explorations, and he was then on his way north. He arrived at York on October 8, intending to go on immediately to Churchill; but stormy weather came up quickly and filled the bay with ice, so that he was detained at York for the winter. He must have been a welcome addition to York society, as he was a man of great talents and charming personality. It was said of him that he was as much at home at Court or in a London drawing-room as he was in an Indian tent or an Eskimo snow house. He and the Hargraves found many tastes in common, though he appears little in the letters. When he left in the spring of 1846 he took with him to the Arctic the recipe for making bread which Letitia speaks of having received from her father the previous summer. It would seem that the Sheriff originated the recipe, and Dr. Rae told of making good bread when he used it at Repulse Bay.¹ Hargrave reported to Sir George Simpson in

⁸⁹John Rae to Hargrave, Fort Confidence, December 11, 1850: "My book has been printed at last and a very short and sorry affair it is. I see that Mr. Barclay has put in the receipt I used for making bread at Repulse Bay which was the one I obtained from you, I believe discovered by Mr. McTavish your father-in-law whose name I should have mentioned had I known that Mr. Barclay would have made a note of the receipt." For this recipe, and details of the bread-making, see John Rae, *Narrative of an expedition to the shores of the Arctic Sea in 1846-47* (London, 1850), p. 168: "June 23, 1847. We made some bread in an oven which we had built of Stones cemented with clay of an excellent

December, "Dr. Rae is busily occupied taking daily observations and improves himself in the required scientific knowledge for rendering his discoveries useful. Every facility is afforded him . . . his complement of men has been completed with choice hands."

The end of November found the depleted office staff at York "grinding from daylight until 8 at night," Hargrave said, "and yet have to send off the packets without the usual documents." He found time, however, to send Nicol Finlayson details of some inch cedar planks three feet long which he wished him to bring with him in the spring, "Mrs. H. being ambitious to possess a cedar chest for her furs." He was able also to report to Duncan Finlayson, "Within our own family we are thriving exceedingly—this great blessing is a wonderful antidote to [illegible] public cares." He wrote to Wemyss Simpson, now in charge at Oxford, to send down a man early in spring to take him there on his way to Norway House and Red River.

1846 At the beginning of March Hargrave duly set off for Norway House and Red River "by the ice," and Letitia spoke of Margaret Sinclair then sharing her bedroom. William Mactavish, as temporary head of the family, occupied the room Margaret had vacated. Hargrave wrote of his safe arrival at Oxford House on March 5,

quality. The upper part of the first batch was well baked but the floor of the oven was not sufficiently warm to bake the lower part. It however rose well and we afterwards succeeded in making excellent bread, though the oven was heated with heather. . . . Receipt—Seven lbs. flour, 1 oz. Carbonate soda, $\frac{3}{4}$ oz. citric acid, $\frac{3}{4}$ oz. common salt, water (cold) about $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon. The salt, soda and acid being finely powdered and dry, are to be well mixed together; this mixture being well wrought up with the dry flour; the water is to be added in 2 or 3 parts and mingled with the flour as quickly as possible; the dough being put into pans is immediately to be placed in the oven." This recipe makes excellent bread.

and at Norway House on March 14, where he intended to wait until open water to continue his journey. Between March 5 and May 25 he sent letters home on nine occasions, an indication of the mail service that was possible, if not usual, at this season of change from sledge to canoe. He was shocked on his arrival at Norway House to learn that W. G. Rae had died the previous January, in California, by his own hand—the reason unknown at Red River. Hargrave wrote a letter of sympathy to Dr. John Rae, in which he spoke of the “worth, pure honor and unstained memory” of his brother, whom he had known so many years.

A few days before starting for Red River he wrote to Letitia that since he left her he was constantly speculating about their “chances of getting home this fall if assistance can be got for William.” He also sent her some flower seeds, mainly for house plants, a present from Donald Ross. Concerned about food supplies at York in his absence, Hargrave immediately applied to Alexander Christie at Red River for a shipment of flour, pork, beef, and butter by the first boats; but he told him he regretted that Red River could expect little imported provisions in return that year, “owing to the state to which Council has reduced York Factory.”

At Red River Hargrave obtained from the Governor no settlement of any kind in his affairs, except a promise of his furlough, due in 1847. On his return to York on July 2 he found Letitia ill. “For some time,” he wrote to Sir George later, “I apprehended that I should have to send her to England this autumn to preserve her life. Lately however, she seems to be recovering.” But the recovery was slow. She was never long away from her sofa until autumn.

Hargrave brought back with him the news that young John Rowand had been in Red River, but had returned to Fort Pitt without expressing any interest in his proposed bride, Margaret Sinclair. It seemed therefore that there was no prospect of her leaving them as they had expected. A letter from Margaret's father, now stationed at Churchill (to his great distaste), awaited Hargrave. It said, "The good wife . . . returns you and your good Lady many thanks for your care of our-Margarett. She is not yet off your hands but I trust she will be ere long. She is rather diffident about going by Proxy, she has never seen the young man she [is] offered to. The proposal came from the old gentleman himself." Hargrave replied that young Rowand evidently had no interest in Margaret, and that they could keep her no longer. Their quarters were small, she was occupying his writing-room at great inconvenience to him, and the young lady was averse to going to Churchill. What were her father's instructions? The outcome was that Margaret left that summer to visit Red River, where she stayed until 1848.

Measles and influenza were ravaging the whole country this summer with great mortality, and the epidemic at York in 1845 was as nothing to that of 1846. On August 5 Hargrave wrote to John George McTavish, "The whole routine of the depot has been so deranged . . . that I have neither strength nor spirits to dwell on the gloomy aspect of our affairs,—many of the crews are dead—the survivors are either struggling with disease or are crawling about the plantation like moving skeletons—all outfits for the North which should now be at Norway House are lying in our stores. . . . In a residence here . . . of upwards of 20 years I have never seen such scenes of private

distress or of derangement in public affairs." By the end of August forty out of one hundred York Indians were dead, and two hundred people had died at Red River.

Hargrave's trip to Council (his only attendance under Governor Simpson after 1839) had evidently confirmed his views of conditions in the service. He wrote at length to John George McTavish about the conduct of the Company's affairs, and concluded with an opinion he and others had expressed before: the necessity for a governor resident in the country throughout the year.¹

There had been some indication earlier that the Company's long-continued efforts to obtain military protection for the Red River Settlement might meet with success this summer; and the Governor had stayed on there, awaiting definite information, and mapping a

¹Hargrave to John George McTavish, August 5, 1846: "I deeply regret to say that a general spirit of discontent is rapidly rising in the service which universally pervades the laborers proper & is fast spreading in the ranks above them. Nothing in my opinion can prevent the Service from suffering deeply and rapidly from this but the residence of our Governor among us again throughout the year." William Todd to Hargrave, February 24, 1846: "If the Gov. cannot make up his mind to remain in the country the sooner he gives up the charge the Better. . . . I hope you men of weight will take up the business as it deserves, as at present the system is sheer humbug carried on by a mere flourish of the quill." R. Miles to Hargrave, Moose Factory, December 10, 1845: "I arrived Michipicoten the 6th [July]. . . . About 11 p.m. his Excellency surprised us all in bed—the 8th business commenced and after dinner on the 11th, . . . all separated leaving . . . Mr. Swanston to ruminate alone on the celerity of the Governor's movements." William Sinclair to Hargrave, Norway House, June 25, 1854: "Our Council of the North, is what may be called 'Bare Bones Council,' it was not systematically gone through—some things were passed over without a discussion and this we did not find out until after the departure of Sir George when it was too late. . . . The news from the Columbia is not known to us as the Governor met the Packer the day he left this and took the documents along with him." Alexander Christie to Hargrave, November 20, 1849: "When writing Sir George Simpson I mentioned that, . . . in order to prevent these irregularities hereafter,—the Governor should reside in the Country, and hold meetings of Council, at the Depots of York-factory and Moose, where the best possible information could be obtained, both in regard to the Outfits and the Servants. . . ."

tentative plan for the reception of the soldiers. On August 6 Hargrave received a letter from him saying "300 troops, 370 people in all" were coming in two hired transports, the *Blenheim* and the *Crocodile*, in company with the yearly ship; and the next day the Governor himself appeared at York to meet them. The scarcity of food and the wide-spread illness at York complicated the arrangements for the troops, but all was in readiness for the influx when the *Prince Rupert* anchored on August 13. The two additional ships arrived shortly afterwards, and Sir George started for Red River with Major Crofton, the officer in charge, on August 24.

William Sinclair had been summoned to conduct the military to Red River, but according to Nicol Finlayson there was a lack of co-operation in the transport of the troops at Norway House on the part of Donald Ross, who, in Sir George's opinion, was rather "hippish and fanciful" with regard to his health. Nicol said that instead of being active after conducting part of the troops thither, Donald Ross "took to his bed and put himself on a regimen of *water gruel*."

As soon as Sir George Simpson had reached York he had evidently realized the critical state of both Letitia's and Hargrave's health, as he had at once arranged Hargrave's furlough for 1846 instead of 1847: and before he left he had booked passages for them. Sir George had ordered that the *Prince Rupert* was to be detained until the arrival of Frank Ermatinger from the Columbia, whom he had also promised a passage to England on furlough. Consequently, on Ermatinger's arrival, the ship sailed with that gentleman and the Hargraves on board. Ermatinger was a man with a puckish sense of humour; he had his frailties, but he was a lovable

character, and the Hargraves were fond of him. It was arranged that as Hargrave was to leave the ship as soon as it reached the coast of England and hasten to London with the Company's despatches, Frank Ermatinger would take charge of Letitia and her family until they reached London. Ermatinger had come from the interior, and had sailed without any opportunity to smarten up for the civilized world; and Letitia began to feel conscious of her escort's appearance as they neared England.

They were delayed in getting into port, so that on October 16, while the ship lay off Lizard Lighthouse, Letitia was able to write to her mother. Among the family greetings, she sent her love to "Polly"; and this is the last time in life that this sister appeared in Letitia's letters. She had had word at York that this sister was ill, but the news could not have seemed alarming, as she wrote to her mother by the transports which left York before the *Prince Rupert*, "I hope Polly has got strong again." The illness must have been worse than Letitia understood, for word of her sister's death was awaiting them in London. Hargrave probably received it at Hudson's Bay House before Letitia's arrival, as he sent the news to Sir George at Lachine when reporting his arrival. The loss, intensified by her poor state of health, must have been a great shock to Letitia. The death had evidently occurred a short time earlier, as the Hargraves made no change in the plans which they had formulated to go on to Edinburgh for medical attention. Hargrave reported to Duncan Finlayson from Edinburgh toward the end of November that he was recovering his health, and that the doctor held out hope for a permanent cure for Letitia. "This I have the greater cause to be grateful for," he wrote, "as he assures me that had she not been

brought to Britain she could not have survived till next year." Sir George wrote from Lachine that he "rejoiced to learn" that Letitia was recovering, "as from the opinion of my namesake, the professional gentleman whom you consulted in Edinburgh, it would appear that her case was of a very serious character." From Edinburgh the Hargraves were thankful to be able to proceed to Kilchrist House at the end of the year, although the homecoming must have been one of some sadness.

1847 The first letter that the Hargraves received in 1847 was one of New Year greetings from their old friend Dr. Gillespie, now in England. He wrote, "I take this opportunity of wishing Mrs. Hargrave and yourself many happy returns of the season, which we have spent together for the preceding five years, not including the last however. I hope Mrs. Hargrave has recovered from her severe indisposition and that she has been enabled to enjoy herself at home. McTavish, Christie and Wilson I daresay have had some return of the festivities at Y.F."

In February Hargrave went up to Edinburgh about the education of Joseph James, as it was proposed now to leave him in Scotland for that purpose. By the advice of Robert Chambers, co-editor with his brother of *Chambers' Repository of Instructive and Amusing Tracts*, Hargrave decided to send his son to Madras College, St. Andrews University, where Robert Chambers's young son James was being educated. Through friends at St. Andrews, he was fortunate in finding a home for Joseph James with the English master at the College, Andrew Young, and his wife, at which Letitia was much pleased. Hargrave later wrote from Kilchrist House to a friend in

Edinburgh called Tom Potts, referring to Robert Chambers's kindness, "I shall never forget the hearty Border frankness with which he interested himself in procuring for me a suitable place for the education of my boy."

The next important matter was their own future. Hargrave went up to London to see the Governor, now arrived from Canada. While there he wrote to their friend Mrs. Loudoun, on April 6, "I have got settled the principal object which brought me to town—my future residence in the Indian country—which is to be my old station at York for some two or three years to come, after which I shall be stationed nearer to the civilized world." He added, on another subject, "I was so fortunate as to see Her Majesty one day in her carriage—merging among the crowds that streamed along the public Drives. She looks well—is plump and fresh, and is said to be likely to add to her subjects in August next."

On May 20 the Hargraves said good-bye to the dear ones at Kilchrist House, which now included Joseph James until the school term opened. Hargrave indicated that the partings were sad; and in later years Letitia spoke of the silence she had to impose upon herself about Joseph James after going back to York. Her heart was sore even to speak of him. They had hoped to leave the little daughter "Tash" and her nurse Mary Clarke in Edinburgh, while they went to St. Andrews so that Letitia might see Joseph James's future home; but Letitia had to remain under Dr. Simpson's care until they left for London on their homeward journey.

With what heart they sailed for York in June it is difficult to say, but at least they were both in better health. It was a long and trying voyage. There was

only one other passenger, an apprentice clerk named David Hume Ross, "a discarded middy, grandnephew of the historian Hume." With Captain Herd and the young ship's doctor, John Sebastian Helmcken, the Hargraves played whist to while away the long evenings. Dr. Helmcken had just received his diploma from the Royal College of Surgeons, and with it, as a reward of merit, the appointment as surgeon of the *Prince Rupert* for the 1847 voyage. In an account of the trip he wrote, "Chief Factor Hargrave and Mrs. Hargrave were passengers also. So the Capt and the above and I had a rubber of whist every night, when possible. I knew nothing about whist, but they broke me in, and account was kept of the games with the debt and so forth! At the end of the journey, I had only four shillings to pay! Not much for learning—Hargrave was a good player, and helped me along."¹

The voyage lengthened out. They were "locked for four weeks" between huge icebergs, and Hargrave later wrote to Sir George that the voyage was one of such hardships that he would not like to subject his wife and child to such another, adding, "nor I trust will I again have cause to do so." They did not reach York until August 25, and by the returning ship Hargrave wrote to his friend Tom Potts in Edinburgh of their four weeks' detention in the ice, saying, "For a week, we were in hourly danger of being crushed between the mighty masses that were rumbling and crashing around us at every ebb and flow of the tide—but Letitia bore the sickness of heart produced by hope deferred till it almost reached despair, with a fortitude that seemed unconquer-

¹From Dr. John Sebastian Helmcken's manuscript reminiscences, dated 1892, in the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, p. 112.

able. . . . She and little Tash actually leaped with delight when they found themselves once more in our comfortable apartments at the Factory."

Hargrave was immediately plunged into a very heavy shipping season. Two ships came this year, and among the brigades which awaited them were forty boats from Red River. The population there had been increased by the soldiers, and York shipped that autumn 2,000 pieces for the Fort Garry shops alone. Added to the heavy labours there was anxiety. The *Westminster*, which had arrived with the *Prince Rupert* carrying military supplies, broke away from her anchor and was blown out to sea. The delay caused by her disappearance meant that the Red River boats on the return journey would be in danger of being frozen in for the winter.

Dr. Helmcken commented on the change that came over Hargrave on their arrival at York. He related, "Now altho Hargraves the Chief Factor and in charge of the fort and district, had been so very familiar and affable on board, no sooner did he set foot ashore than he became dignified cold and distant! Like an admiral, who may be pleasant and urbane ashore, but the moment his foot touches the deck, he is the admiral—discipline prevails, and he may or may not be a tyrant. Hargrave was nevertheless kind in his way, but . . . he had to go into harness at once."¹

Dr. Helmcken was not favourably impressed with York. He entered the Company's service two years later, but his appointment was to a pleasanter country, the Columbia Department. He described York's palisades, made from the small stunted trees as "flimsy things and if I remember right, one above the other."

¹*Ibid.*, p. 114.

The vast morass as far as the eye could see, he said, was dangerous in summer, and the narrow bank along the river, the only land to walk on, depressed him. "It was and is a miserable place, apparently worthless. . . . The people about the Fort seemed happy and healthy enough—but were longing for winter! because then the swamp was frozen and covered with snow and they could drive their sledges for hundreds of miles on a level!"¹

Dr. Helmcken wrote also of personalities at York:

Here I saw McTavish, the accountant, who was the brother of Mrs. Hargrave. . . . McTavish was "sandy," pleasant but not talkative—a thinking man. . . . There were of course other officers, from various places and belonging to the Fort itself, but I do not remember their names, but one was from Churchill, who was not liked because he was considered a sneak, going about taking notes, and an eavesdropper. He had a son affected with snow blindness, the first I had seen. Dr. Smiley [Smellie] was the medico—he seemed to have to attend to other duties not at all connected with his profession, which he did not like—possibly serving out rations or attending to some store. He asked me to stay and allow him to go home for a holliday [*sic*], but as I had to be back at the Hospital and assuredly did not like the factory and surroundings, I politely declined. He was a good fellow too but seemed out of place. He showed me the furs &c and I wanted to buy some martins. Hargraves said the rule was that any one purchasing would have to pay the highest ruling price in London for the kind of Fur. Of course the young men were full of fun—but of course this seemed to be their festival. . . .² Burke the botanist,³ an eccentric fellow, had come from the interior and having been spilt into the river had lost every thing. He had trowsers too long and coat too short, the best the Cos store, not much stocked, could supply, but which made him very grotesque—tho [that] did not matter here. Of natives there are but few. A

¹*Ibid.*

²*Ibid.*, pp. 115-17.

³See letter 42, p. 161.

woman went away to gather sticks, returning with the sticks and a baby which she had passed in her travels, into the bargain. She had only been gone a few hours.¹

Dr. Helmcken gave an intimate picture of the mess.

The first time I dined at the Mess, Hargrave at the head and McTavish at the foot of the table, Hargrave descanted on the beauties and benefits of "white fish" of which some small ones were on the table, caught I suspect in the river. However ducks came on—and asked whether I would take duck or goose—"duck"—so a whole one was put on my plate! Not [a] very large one to be sure, but I did not know how to begin eating it, but before I had begun, my neighbor sent for another! Oh he said if you were here in the winter you would see us eat two or three geese each!—they kept these stored in ice. Then came cranberry tarts—Cranberries are plentiful and each tart being about two feet long and 8 inches or so broad—of course this had to be cut in pieces.

There was Madeira Wine—and it was said that Madeira was sent from England to be stored away for seasoning and then returned to England again for the HBC magnates.

No mosquitoes—Oh said my neighbor, if you had arrived a couple of weeks earlier, you would not have sat so quietly in your open cane bottom chair—these pests are awful here in their season.²

Like Letitia, Dr. Helmcken noted at York the "powder magazine built of solid masonry—imported from England," and he also related that "Hargrave shewed me a shed covered with glass, in which they tried to grow radishes turnips and vegetables—some grew to the size of marbles, but as a rule the young plants were destroyed by flies. Nothing in the shape of vegetables can be cultivated here.

"I saw the dog kennels and outside, big seals almost as large as men—this to feed the dogs of whom a highlander was in charge, but the stench from seals and dogs was

¹Provincial Archives of British Columbia, Helmcken's reminiscences, p. 120.

²*Ibid.*, p. 118.

not pleasant and so I soon quit—and thus know nothing about the HBC stables—for dogs are the only animals used in winter season.”¹

Letitia’s personality had evidently impressed Dr. Helmcken, for in telling of her kindness to him while at York, he gave a picture of her. “Mrs. Hargrave,” he wrote, “was one of those nice ladies one occasionally meets with, kind and affable. Altho not handsome she had a decidedly nice face, and a very pleasing expression—with a very good figure—her house was a few yards from the Fort proper—small but of course nice and nicely kept—a daughter small and bright, named Tash. . . . Anyhow Mrs. Hargrave made things pleasant for me, for I had nothing to do but loaf in this constricted place.”²

Dr. John Rae and his party arrived back at York from his Arctic explorations on September 6, and Dr. Helmcken described him as “an active powerful broad shouldered man, of medium height—dark and bronzed—full of energy and as active as a squirrell [*sic*] and good humoured, and natured.”³ Hargrave wrote of the party’s safe arrival, with great praise for Dr. Rae, to Edward Clouston of Stromness, who no doubt relayed the praise to his neighbour, the doctor’s mother. Hargrave related that the party had “arrived in perfect health . . . after having most successfully accomplished the object of the Expedition of Discovery. Not a single life was lost nor a single accident occurred throughout the arduous journey—a circumstance that speaks more for the merits of the conductor than any words of mine could do. Dr. Rae and a part of his people go home on the *Prince Rupert*.”

¹*Ibid.*, pp. 118-19.

²*Ibid.*, p. 121.

³*Ibid.*, pp. 121-2.

Hargrave wrote other letters for the ship. He told Joseph James all about their voyage back to York. To John Rendall, his former associate at York, now back in London where they had renewed their associations recently, he reported as an item of York news, "Old Bob Garson . . . still rules the Mess Kitchen and sports as dirty a flannel shirt as ever. He is however a trusty old Trojan whom I should like ill to lose." He sent the Company's secretary in London a sample of the biscuit supplied to the *Prince Rupert*, "a villainous compound of beans and rye"; and told him of their need of "a plain substantial time piece to regulate the labors of our people," as "wooden cases warp and works soon get out of order in our changeable climate."

The Hargraves' travelling companion of the previous autumn, Frank Ermatinger, had returned to Canada in the spring. On his way to his new appointment at Fort Chipewyan, he found awaiting him at Norway House a letter that Hargrave had written to him from London; and he replied before continuing his journey. "It gave me the greatest gratification to hear that Sister Hargrave was perfectly recovered, God bless her. Not so, however to hear that she is doomed to the solitude, swamps, infernal fried suckers and salt geese of York Factory. What constitution can stand such fare in such a place?" Ermatinger had been bespoken as godfather for the Hargraves' next child, and he added, "Little Tash, dear little Tash, she too must be solitary, at least *for a few months*, until Joseph's place can be supplied. Pray give my kind respects to Mrs. H. and tell her that I feel I was made a better man by her society." Hargrave replied to this in November: "We are spending a delightful winter—plenty of work—plenty of exercise, with plenty of good

cheer and good fellowship. . . . It may be some time before you stand god father to poor Tash's successor." However, before the year was out, they knew that the successor might be expected in the coming July.

- 1848 In January, 1848, the letter that Hargrave had written to John George McTavish the previous autumn was returned from Red River by Alexander Christie, with the information that McTavish had died of cholera in Montreal on July 20, 1847. Hargrave later wrote of the loss, to Sinclair at Churchill, "I have yet no spirits equal to any thing beyond the routine of this place. . . . He was my oldest friend in the country and my regard for him was like that of a son for a father."

John George McTavish was a man of rare personality. No officer in the Company was more esteemed, and he seemed to inspire a sort of hero-worship in those who served under him. A comment of Letitia's suggests this.¹ Frank Ermatinger had seen him among some retired officers of the Company in Montreal the previous year and had written to Hargrave, "John George, good man . . . Oh! Hargrave what a contrast he shows to the other North Westers— but he is a gentleman in any country and in any society." Her uncle's death must have been a sad break in family ties for Letitia, but as a rule she said little in her letters of that which touched her deeply.

The trip home the previous year had proved only a palliative, as far as Hargrave's health was concerned. The climate of York, after twenty years, now really had him in its grip, and his condition grew progressively worse during the next three years. Letitia's general

¹See letter 41, p. 157.

health, however, after eight years at York, seemed little affected by the climate, a fact which had long been remarked by Hargrave's friends. Possibly, coming from the damp foggy coast of Kintyre, she was somewhat acclimatized to Hudson Bay, which was most fortunate. Barnston, who had lived at York and Churchill, after a visit to Kilchrist House, said, "Kilchrist is a nice residence, but the climate is too moist."

Hargrave wrote to Nicol Finlayson on March 31 that sickness was general in the Fort, "York being determined to keep up its character of the 'Pontine marshes' of the North, whatever precautions be used"; and in a letter to Ermatinger written on the same day he said, "But such has ever been the expected news from this Coast, that the fact receives no more attention than the cawing of a rook in Spring. Never mind, the longest day drags through. My own family, Thank God! are quite well: the little Tash after a dose of influenza is again active and blooming as ever—while Madame is not lately quite so well, but much to my gratification in every way, is fast growing in bulk beyond all reasonable proportion."

Toward the end of May, Hargrave was recovering from influenza himself, and went about his work not only crippled by rheumatism, but with his head wrapped in a shawl from neuralgia and toothache, "and," he told Ermatinger, "with my clothes hanging about me like a scarecrow." He reported his wife as being well, and admonished him, "Remember that there are *very serious duties* as well as a name attached to the rank of a *God-father*."

The news of the death of Hargrave's father, at the age of ninety-two, in September, 1847, came that spring, and Hargrave wrote to Ross, "I now begin to feel myself

alone in the world, but one sheet from Britain . . . was full of comfort. Our little boy is safely fixed at St. Andrews . . . and likes and delights in his new course of study."

The largest body of people in York's history was expected there that autumn. This was because the military detachment at Red River was being replaced by a body of pensioners from England,¹ and the ship that brought the pensioners out was to take back the soldiers of the 6th Foot from Red River. Hargrave was much concerned about these arrangements, especially because of lack of food and lack of instructions from Sir George. He had written to Alexander Christie in March:

I am really surprised at the utter silence of our Head, with regard to the business of next summer, and only feel surprised at the moderation of your notice of it, to the Secretary. It is almost impossible to be prepared for a sudden torrent of action for which you have been deprived of the power of making preparation. . . . By the way, the hordes of military will make a breach among my [illegible] cattle, for the Mess when here, and my stock is so low that without aid from R.R. I know not how we shall get on. One of our best oxen was drowned last summer—one died of old age, and to get roast beef for the officers, I must knock a cow in the head. . . . As to my own Mess, we must do our best with what little venison can be procured, and when this fails, as it did thro' the early part of this year, we have salt geese, pemican and Dried Meat.

At the end of June Hargrave was still in the doctor's hands, and wondering how he would stand up to the summer's work. He was caustic to Donald Ross about not being allowed to go to Council. "I must not break bounds," he wrote. At the last moment, however, William had been summoned there by an Express

¹A. Ross, *The Red River Settlement* (London, 1856), pp. 365-6.



MARY JANE HARGRAVE, SECOND DAUGHTER OF JAMES AND
LETITIA HARGRAVE

From a photograph lent by Miss Letitia Macfarlane.

messenger, which made them suspect that there was something of moment on the *tapis*. After William's return, Hargrave reported to Richard Grant, now in the Columbia District: "I of course remain here . . . Mac-tavish is taken from me and sent to the Sault, Clouston being married to Jessy Ross is put in charge of General Accounts, Ballenden is Factor and is to succeed Mr. Christie at Red River. With the exception of poor Wilson, I have not one mess mate whom you know."

When William had gone on furlough in 1844 Hargrave had said that it was like cutting off his right hand to let him go, happy though he was for William's sake. Now he wrote to William's brother Dugald, "One serious misfortune—William is to be withdrawn and sent to the Sault. For the sake of his health, I rejoice at the change, as his summer duties here were murderous, and a factorship is not gained in a Counting House, but we shall miss his company very much." He also informed Dugald of Joseph James's progress at school, saying, "He dictates a letter himself and two of his most prominent topics are, 'love to Uncle Dugald' and inquiries as to the prosperity of 'old Rose' his playmate."

Letitia had not been well all spring. Expecting her child, and being shut in more than usual with the servant Mary Clarke, the latter seemed to get on her nerves. However, Hargrave wrote of Letitia and himself on July 8 as being in good spirits. Three days later another daughter made her appearance; and Hargrave wrote to Donald Ross on the fourteenth: "At this time . . . have been added some cares of another description, my wife having thought proper to select the very top of the tide of our summer crush to present me with a fine chubby daughter. This occurred only three days ago, and altho'

all are prospering amazingly I cannot find a moment to look in on them unless at meals."¹

When the time came for William to say good-bye to York, Hargrave was feeling cheerful in the prospects of leaving it himself. Sir George had written, "I cannot see any opening that would suit you next year, but in 1850 I think a removal that would be acceptable might be effected if you particularly desire it." To this Hargrave replied on August 14, "Your most kind purpose of meeting my most anxious desire to be relieved from my long and heavy charge of this depot and District has given a stimulus to my spirits they much wanted. I shall contentedly toil on until 1850, if my health will but hold out so long. . . . I would desire much to have a personal interview with you next spring at the meeting of Council. . . . This interview would enable me to make very satisfactory arrangements and give you many explanations I cannot do on paper. I have no wish to *dip into politics again*. Should you be pleased to grant my desire I will prove myself this time—a good boy."

There is no clue to the matter to which Hargrave here refers, which must have happened during his attendance at Council in 1846. He had, however, expressed himself at different times on two live questions: the need of a resident governor, and a change in the seat of Council.² Whatever the "politics" may have been, the matter had

¹A postscript to this letter dated July 15 further indicates the turmoil at York: "*Privately*—Try to keep your parson at home this autumn—for we will have difficulties enough without the embarrassment of Preaching to clog our wheels.— No man will have time to listen amid the stir of the crowds that will be with us of necessity and his admonitions 'saving eno' when in season—will then only be cauld parritch thrown down a stuffed throat.— Keep *this* & him to yourself for *my sake*."

²The Company made an attempt to grapple with these questions in 1849.

evidently come to the Governor's ears. Simpson had devious means of keeping informed upon feeling and opinions in Rupert's Land.¹ However, to Hargrave's reference Sir George replied, "I do not know what you mean by saying you will be 'a good boy' at Council; I never knew you to be otherwise."

William departed for the Sault on August 16, just four days after the arrival of the first transport, the *General Palmer*, with Major Caldwell, the new governor of Assiniboia, and half the party of pensioners, a hundred and fifty in number, on board. The *Prince Rupert* had not yet been heard of, and Hargrave wrote to Ross, "Poor Herd . . . every Captain now brings his weak vessel here as safely as he brings his Castle and often more expeditiously." The second transport with the remaining pensioners arrived shortly, and also four boat brigades from Red River, bringing the military. For about a week, over a thousand people must have been gathered at York, and for once in its history it took on a metropolitan air. The fort was filled with guests, and the gentlemen's mess was in a gala mood. The large boat-house had been prepared for the women and children, and they, together with the red coats, gave colour to the busy scene.

In speaking later of the visit of the troops and pensioners, Hargrave wrote to Barnston, "Their presence at this place at the same time in last August was a taste of

¹Simpson to Hargrave, London, March 22, 1838: "Let me beg of your writing me fully both from Montreal and York and let me know confidentially the 'sayings and doings' in Rupert's Land." Simpson to Hargrave, May 25, 1838: "Pray write me fully and confidentially by the Ship and let me into all the Reports, Chit Chat and Politics of Rupert's Land. Touch on all manner of subjects without ceremony or reserve and as briefly as you please 'a word to the wise' being sufficient."

civilization not soon forgotten, a large party of excellent young fellows. Their officers were a cheerful addition to our usual Mess and the whole plantation was covered with tents and red coats." The first transport sailed on August 30. Donald Ross wrote to Ballenden, now in charge of Fort Garry, about the newcomers to Red River. "Caldwell," he said, "is invested with a commission to examine into the charges brought against the Company by Isbister and others.¹ . . . In selecting him the Company has acted wisely. Captain Foss has charge of the pensioners and nothing more."

Life at York for the rest of 1848 was uneventful, except for the incident of young George Miles getting lost,² which Letitia relates. Hargrave wrote to his friends about the new baby, who had been named Mary Jane, and who, he said, "is distinguished by her appetite and good humour—a fortunate thing for me as in these days of toil I require a quiet night's rest." He wrote to Joseph James saying he hoped he remembered what he had told him:

to speak truth, to say your prayers, to be gentle to playmates and obedient to your Masters, to think what you say, and to whom you are speaking. Dear Mama will have told you all the news about York so I need not say much on that matter. Dear little Tash is growing a tall pretty and good girl. . . . I wish much I could send you one of Rose's little puppies in a box. This is a young Rose you have not seen. Poor old Rose on whose back you used to ride is now dead. Mary Clarke is very busy nursing another little sister named Mary Jane that dear Mama gave to me about two months ago. Tash loves her very much and so will you, I hope. Nancy is no longer here. I married her to a husband last autumn—a very good man—and they went home to Orkney in the ship. Tash has now another Indian girl to attend her, but she can speak

¹Ross, *Red River Settlement*, pp. 366-9.

²See letter 62, p. 239.

no English and Tash can speak no Indian, so they are very quiet when they play together making houses and gardens. I hope you will next year be able to write me a little letter yourself.

Sir George Simpson's book about his world tour in 1841-2 formed part of the Hargraves' reading that winter.¹ They had also been expecting Dr. John Rae's account of his Arctic expedition of 1846-7. Rae was now at Fort Confidence with Dr. John Richardson on his search for Sir John Franklin, and Hargrave wrote to him in November (which was "winter" at York): "Last Autumn we were anxiously looking out for your expected Narrative—but from some cause or other no copy of it has reached us—perhaps it had not been published when the ships sailed." A lasting friendship had been formed between Hargrave and Rae, one which proved valuable to the latter some years later, when Hargrave, who was living in Toronto at the time, was able to assure the father of a young lady there whom Rae wished to marry, that Rae was not a married man with a family, as the father had been informed.

When William Mactavish left York in August, Robert Clouston had assumed his position as General Accountant for Rupert's Land, and was now "giving a good account of himself" in it. Clouston, whom Hargrave coupled with Augustus Peers as one of the two most promising and able young men in the Service, had arrived at York on June 27, accompanied by his bride of three months, Jessy, the daughter of Donald Ross of Norway House. No better or sadder instance can be found of the havoc wrought by tuberculosis, before medical research changed the picture, than the tragic story of this young couple, as it appears in Letitia's and other letters. Robert

¹This was his *Narrative of a journey round the world* (2 vols., London, 1847).

Clouston evidently was tuberculous when he was married the previous March; and it was probably only a short time before his young wife contracted the disease. He had good resistance and lived for some years, but she succumbed quickly. The attitude of those about them reflects the scientific benightedness of the times. The Cloustons were soon settled in the limited accommodation York afforded, and in August Letitia had written to her mother, "Poor Mr. Clouston has had a severe cough for a year past and looks very ill. The idea here is that he is consumptive and I have seen many in a decline who did not look so like it."¹ Yet when his wife was ill in September and in bed for a week, no one suspected the real cause. Now, at the end of the year, she was going about as usual again, and spent much time with Letitia, who reported her, without thought of any cause for it, "as dull as ever." All the following spring Letitia did what she could for Jessy, who took to her bed in February, never to leave it for long again. Dr. Smellie then used his stethoscope for the first time, but he was not apprehensive.² Robert Clouston wrote to Jessy's father of her severe cold, and complained of their situation, as in his position as clerk they were not allowed a servant. However, he said, the Hargraves had "uniformly been remarkably kind and considerate," and "Mrs. Hargrave has been very attentive to Jessy's wants, getting things made for her and occasionally sending over an Indian girl who is her servant."³ Letitia was soon sending the servant every day to do what she could. In July, wasted to a skeleton, Jessy was sent home to

¹See letter 60, p. 233.

²See letter 63, p. 242.

³This was Nancy's successor, Betsy.

Norway House. She was still not considered seriously ill. Three weeks later she died, even while Robert, himself with one lung half gone, was happily making plans for her return to York.

1849 It was a severe and barren winter on the coast of Hudson Bay in 1849. There were no partridges, no fish, no rabbits, and until March, no venison. Hargrave wrote to Ballenden, "Had we not had our friend Christie's six sheep by the fall boats,¹ our fare would have been unvaried salt geese, pemican, or at best a piece of condemned ox some 15 years old—hard as horn and black as junk."

All spring Hargrave suffered with headaches, vomiting, and derangement of the bowels, as well as rheumatism, "those diseases of the fogs and swamps," he wrote, "and hardly able to drag my limbs about the Factory." Letitia, too, he said, was "more of an invalid than is her wont." Borne up by the thought of leaving York next year, however, he wrote to Alexander Christie that in spite of difficulties, "all goes forward, however, regularly as usual, and in the spirit of our own honest Country's recommendation, 'keep a stoot breast to a' stave brae.'"

This year there were some incidents with Sir George Simpson that determined Hargrave to take his affairs into his own hands. On April 21 he had received both public and private letters from the Governor written on November 22, 1848. He was told he could not leave York "even for one day." Indignantly he wrote to William Mactavish:

My letters from Sir George were more indefinite than ever as regards my being relieved from the charge of this depot. He

¹Alexander Christie to Hargrave, August 8, 1848: "I have a man off through the settlement searching for six prime sheep to send to YF."

coolly tells me—as if I had never before pressed him on the subject that “I shall be most happy to meet your views if in my power in reference to an appointment, whenever you express a desire to leave York factory.” This is literally playing with me—and I shall not address to him another word on the subject until my rotation allows me a furlough: when I shall ascertain whether I cannot lay down a course myself that will not be made the sport of such fast & loose mode of keeping promises. . . . I have deserved better things at his hands—but of late have no hope of being better treated than others who deserve much more—who have from his promises reaped only disappointment. I have publicly been roundly rated for the impoverished state of the country in goods, and in person told that I alone am responsible for the empty state of the depot.

In a letter to Donald Ross the previous July, after listing the goods he had sent him, Hargrave had said:

Would that I could replenish *my* supply exchequer so easily for the famine Hunger of this season has totally emptied the Depot again. . . . I am positively frightened at the demand for Goods from all quarters. The Governor seems to have thrown the reins on the neck of the Country, and is positively blaming us for obeying his former written instructions in keeping down Indents on England. The result is that your boasted £17,000 is “like butter in the black Dog’s mouth,” and will not nearly meet the unprecedented orders handed to me this season. Between these rocks I am therefore in a fix. My only hope is—that *some one* else may have to divide the Goods I am now so fettered in providing. Such is my only hope and consolation, for I cannot long continue to support the doubling of labor & reduction of help that for some time has been brot. to bear on my devoted head. Poor Colin Robertson’s prophecy of “York with Hargrave and a Cook” seems not yet to be lost sight of by those who rule our destinies.

Hargrave now went above the Governor’s head and mentioned his health in a public letter he sent to Council at Norway House. On June 5 he wrote privately to Sir George and said that he had felt it his duty to do so. It was at this time that he wrote to William Mactavish

sketching in words of fire his future policy with regard to his affairs. The Governor's letters to Hargrave, written during the last week he was at Norway House following Council, fairly kept the waters churned between the two places. Simpson sent off three on June 28, the day he left. In the last one, received by Hargrave on July 4, Simpson mentioned without comment that Eden Colvile "had taken his seat as a governor of Rupert's Land," and quoted the minute of the London Committee whereby Colvile was to share, not only Sir George's labours, but his salary to the extent of £500. Simpson's last letter contained also the most shattering blow. He wrote, "As regards your removal from the Factory next year, I do not see how I can meet your views." This came like a bomb shell on the Hargraves, buoyed up as they had been by the Governor's previous word in the matter. They were learning that promises, friendship, and even family ties, did not exist when the Company's interests and those of the individual clashed: the man was sacrificed. "Sir George's blood as governor ran ice."¹ This was not the smiling courtly gentleman Letitia had known in London. In the face of his present attitude, there seemed, however, nothing to do but to carry on grimly, and hope for the best.

In the meantime, Hargrave had to deal with an event of importance in July: the expected arrival by the ship of a bishop for the Church of England in Rupert's Land. In a season of much food scarcity at York, he begged from Ballenden at Red River, "as large a store of Colony comforts as you can spare for the service of the Bishop," and from Robertson at Oxford, he asked for cranberries by the next boats. While at Norway House the Governor

¹W. E. Ingersoll, *Winnipeg Free Press*, Winnipeg, Manitoba, June 16, 1945.

had sent out orders for the bishop's reception. Great preparations were being made to accommodate him during his travels along the communications between York and Red River. Duncan Finlayson had written to Donald Ross from England on May 29, "The Bishop proceeds to his diocese. He is a widower and takes out his sister with him, to take care of his children; also a chaplain and his wife. The Church Missionary Society are sending out a *Mr. Hunt* who has taken to himself a wife a day or two since *Miss Clouston*, the Agent's daughter at Stromness goes out too, consigned to young *Pelly*, with whom she is to be married I have complied with your request about the *champagne* and have sent out three dozen which will give a tolerable drink to the bishop and enable you to toss a bumper to the bride. . . . But as to your desire to taste turtle 'portable post' soup, we thought that the native sturgeon was much more suitable."

No unseemly conduct was to catch the bishop's eye. The Governor had instructed Hargrave, "Pray take care that there are no drunken scenes at York at any time—more especially when the Bishop passes . . . and do not let Brigades start on Sundays." The brigade men, on the whole, were a wild lawless set; and though non-spirituious regales were the rule at York, liquor was not unknown. It was ordered on special occasions for special services. The Governor himself had written to Hargrave in 1846, "Let the R.R. people have a drink from me."

The summer was a busy one, as usual. On July 13 Hargrave wrote to Roderick McKenzie, who for the first time in many years was unable to come to York that season, "I am particularly pressed down just now with an accumulation of business and of sickness which latter

has fallen upon almost every experienced aide (to-gether with myself) which I have allowed me— at the most critical season of the year. . . . Amid all my cares and sufferings I am rejoiced to say that my family is quite well.” But the general illness and lack of adequate help continued to increase Hargrave’s difficulties. Donald Ross reported on July 19 the doings at Council: “Of the crippled state of your working establishment I was well aware and spoke strongly on it too, but had hard work even to get Lockhart to replace Griffin. My influence in advocating the cause of York Factory was small enough before, it is now entirely gone, partly from the fact of my having a relative there, and partly from other causes which it would be useless to rehearse.” On August 12 Hargrave wrote to the Governor, “I have had a hard struggle to stand up to duty through this last month being not only a cripple but my right thigh has lost all sensation, and in Dr. Smellie’s judgment the symptoms threatened paralysis.” Dr Smellie later changed his opinion, however, and agreed with Hargrave that there was only one cause underlying his ailments, and that was York. Hargrave continued to the Governor, “It is Dr. Smellie’s opinion *on the whole*—that I might still hold out for a few years could it be possible to allow me a month’s relaxation from the charge each spring.” He reiterated his old plea to be allowed to attend Council at Norway House next spring, but was again refused.

The *Prince Rupert* arrived in York Roads on August 14, and the cabin passengers came on shore. Besides the bishop and his numerous party, there were the new medical man for York, Dr. Wills, and his wife, and Dr. Cowan for the service at Red River. Bishop Anderson and his party remained at York until the twenty-ninth;

and Hargrave later told of the "rare merrymakings" among their guests, "nothing but marrying and giving in marriage," as the bishop performed the ceremonies for Anne Clouston and A. E. Pelly, and for Mary Sinclair and William Christie.

Hargrave wrote of the bishop to Robert Miles as a "gentleman eminently fitted for his high position in this land," and said, "For a fortnight or three weeks the Factory was a scene of gaiety from the crowds of ladies with us at every time on the platforms." He wrote to Kilchrist House, "Letitia and our little ones are all quite well. They all have enjoyed some most delightful days in the society of His Lordship's sister . . . and the little Bishopsprigs, as fond of romping as Tash can be, full of life."

In his yearly ship letter to Joseph James, and replying to two he had received from his son, Hargrave remarked on the improvement in the lad's handwriting:

Very good for a young gentleman of some eight years old. Tash is trying to learn to read, but I fear she likes better to look at the pictures than to read the stories. . . . She loves romping with Mary Jane, rather than her Book. Mary Jane cannot walk yet but is very active—upon all fours—especially when I hold out some "sweeties" to tempt her to do so. . . . We have a new schooner which was building when you left YF—named the *Letitia*. Do you know any lady called by that name? Mr. Wilson who used to be so kind to you is still here and quite well. He is a very worthy man and I got his salary raised this year because his valuable services deserved to be better paid. He desires his kind regards to you.

But amid the gaiety of the crowd at York, Hargrave and Letitia were filled with anxious forebodings. The hired ship, the *Graham*, which had accompanied the *Prince Rupert*, had not appeared. The weeks went by;

the bishop and his party left on August 29; the *Prince Rupert* sailed on September 11; but still the *Graham* did not arrive. It became increasingly certain that she was lost: the worst blow in Hargrave's entire years of service. The *Prince Rupert*, built specially strongly for the voyage to Hudson Bay, had brought only the Red River consignment, consisting of private orders, gunpowder, and tobacco; while the frailer *Graham* carried the whole trade outfit of the year—the necessities for every post in the Northern Department. London's blundering in this arrangement of cargoes brought caustic comment at York.

The gravity of the situation can be seen in the letters Hargrave sent off to his fellow officers by special Express, and in the support he received from Donald Ross, John Ballenden, and others. Careful plans were made to avert widespread disaster. Ballenden wrote to Ross on December 17, "Your letter of the 27th November hardly surprised me. Nothing having been heard of the *Graham* previous to the 10th of September, led me to anticipate the worst. . . . I wrote Sir George Simpson making suggestions . . . which I considered might easily be adopted. Copy of that letter is herewith forwarded as also a joint letter from Dr. Todd, Mr. Black and myself, authorizing you, so far as we are concerned, to act alone until the arrival of the Governor, and pledging ourselves to be guided by your instructions. . . . I trust we shall be able to show the Company that in extreme cases like the present they may rely with implicit confidence on the wintering partners."

The Governor wrote to Ross from Lachine, "From what Hargrave says of the state of the York depot, I fear that with all our exertions, we shall have difficulty in providing even moderate outfits for the whole country.

The distant districts and the frontier must claim our first attention and if any parts are to be curtailed it must fall most heavily on those near the Bay which . . . may receive supplies after the arrival of the ships next fall. We must put a good face on our difficulties and not let the servants or Indians suppose there is any serious scarcity of goods as, if a report of that kind got abroad, there is no knowing what evil consequences may result."

After a few weeks, Hargrave began to accept the matter philosophically. With the season's heavy work over, and the inauguration of plans to offset the loss of the *Graham*, he began to recuperate his strength. "With the blessing of God upon our efforts," he wrote to Ballenden on October 31, "I hope we will before this time next year have recovered from the blow." He wrote to William Mactavish on the same day, that with Clouston gone home in ill health, he could have a guess as to who would replace him, "so let your house be got in order . . . in the event of your having to retrace your steps."

The whole situation, however, was telling upon Letitia. The hope of leaving York in 1850, which the Governor had given them, had proved vain; and it was with difficulty that Letitia kept up her heart all that summer. In her letter of October 30 to her mother she seemed to have reached the nadir of her hopes. Year after year her husband had gone down under the rigours and responsibilities of York, from which there seemed no relief and no release. Though she cheered herself that he was now "better than for a year past," yet she admitted, "I can't help thinking he is looking worn and old." Year after year they had looked for an upward

trend in their fortunes, but even Hargrave's factorship had brought little in honours or emoluments.¹

The one ambition that possessed the Hargraves now was to be removed nearer to civilization and to Joseph James. In this connection Hargrave had spoken of Sault Ste. Marie to the Governor when in London in 1847. If Hargrave had formerly had other ambitions in the Service, they had become resolved into this one only as the years went on and he remained chained to York. He felt, as he later expressed it to Ballenden, that he was asking too much of his wife's affection to let her so long endure such hardships.

Removal from York had thus become the goal of their desire; but by the autumn, the alarming turn in the Company's affairs at Red River left Letitia with no heart in anything. The Company had been passing through critical years with regard to its trade monopoly.² Sir George had been trying desperately to save it, but his officers saw it crumbling, and now the end was approaching. The echoing cries of the Metis after the Sayer trial at Red River in May, "La traite est libre!" had reached York; and Letitia felt the fabric of their life disintegrating. Expressing the thoughts of those round her, she wrote to her mother, "The Company will be soon utterly abolished."³ For this reason, Letitia did not care

¹Donald Ross Papers, Ross to P. S. Ogden, July 29, 1849: "Hitherto our great ambition was to ascend from a clerkship to a chiefactorship; at no very distant period I suspect the ambition will take a downward course, inasmuch as a salary of £100 a year is considerably better than nothing."

²See J. Perry Pritchett, *The Red River Valley, 1811-1849* (Toronto, 1942), pp. 255-62; Morton, *Sir George Simpson*, pp. 193-203.

³Donald Ross Papers, Ross to P.S. Ogden, July 29, 1849: "It would be a hopeless task for me to attempt giving any detailed account of the present very unfavorable state of things on this side of the mountains. Universal Free Trade has long been preached in Rupert's Land, now it is in open and uncontrolled

whether they left York or not, it mattered little where they lived. Their years there had been for nothing. Hargrave's career would soon be over, and with it would disappear their security for their old age. His plea to leave York had again been refused, but now it was a matter of no moment.

Some drastic solutions of the Company's difficulties were being put forward. Donald Ross had written to the Governor in the previous year, proposing that the Company should sell out to the government rather than "to continue holding the rights and privileges of trade on the present rather precarious and not very profitable footing, struggling against hope, and as it were, stemming a current which it will be impossible to withstand." Sir George had replied, "The contents of your private and confidential letter are quite in accordance with my own sentiments on the subject; I have touched on the subject to the Governor more than a year ago and have lately sent him an extract from your letter and I should be delighted to see such an arrangement as you suggest carried into effect."¹

More than ever, during this crisis, Letitia cherished practise." Ross to W. Smith, August 23, 1849: "... the radical and now American priest, Belcourt, is in reality the Governor of Rupert's Land,—the trade will, as a matter of course, speedily become altogether profitless." George Barnston pictured the Company's struggle graphically in a letter to Hargrave dated August 27, 1852: "Interests and parties inimical to them [the Company] are ... striking deep roots in the country. You have seen a noble tree while it was cared for, trimmed and regularly pruned, thrive and flourish, but the moment parasites were allowed to fasten on it, it would soon go. With the Dodder comes the Moss, with the moss the fern, till the burdened tree decayed at heart, worm-eaten around, displays a sapless Trunk and a few leafy branches, enough only to show that whatever its former vigor, there is now only what supplies nourishment to the creepers and fungi that are fastened upon it below. Thus it is becoming with the old Hudson's Bay Company and its once thriving fur Trade."

¹Donald Ross Papers, Simpson to Ross, November 22, 1848. See also Douglas MacKay, *The Honourable Company* (Toronto, 1936), p. 216.

the happiness within their home, the one refuge for them both under all these blows. Time was to prove, however, that their fortunes were at their lowest ebb this autumn; and the next year marked the upturn in the Hargraves' personal affairs.

1850 By the time Letitia knew their fifth child was to be expected early in September, she knew also that they definitely were to leave York—at least “if promises could be depended upon”; for Sir George had arranged that they should be moved to Sault Ste. Marie. The Hargraves seemed prepared to go to any length to get away from York. In spite of Letitia's expected confinement in September, Hargrave wrote to Sir George on April 1, “Your kind favor of the 24th August . . . I assure you relieved my spirits greatly as you informed me that you hoped to be enabled to arrange my removal from this Factory to some appointment nearer to the civilized world, which I learn from Mactavish you intend to be at Sault Ste Mary. For this I cannot feel sufficiently grateful both as regards my family and myself. The untoward events of the past fall in our shipping is the only thing which may effect this arrangement in point of time, but I shall be ready to obey your call at an hour's warning whenever you may be able to spare me from this place.”

The prospect of release from York had one aspect that troubled Hargrave. He wrote to William Mactavish, “The only feature in it which pains me is the way in which it will affect your own interests, and I would . . . as willingly, believe me, have escaped the appointment . . . than to have received it at your expense. . . . Some day your interests may come my way, . . . and you may

depend on it, I will not forget your brotherly conduct in the matter." The words were prophetic. He little thought, as he penned them, at what sacrifice he would one day willingly repay the debt.

It was finally arranged that Hargrave would go to his new post at Sault Ste. Marie in a year's time, the spring of 1851. Since William was to be posted back to York in his place, it was arranged that Letitia would remain at York with him, go home by the ship in the fall of 1851, and join Hargrave at the Sault in 1852.

Hargrave wrote of William to Dr. John Rae, "With all the luxuries at the Sault, I find that he still has a hankering, not after the flesh pots, but the salt geese of this coast. After all, to a man of activity, the Sault with all its comforts must prove dull, especially while life is still before him and his ambition of distinguishing himself in it still exists." It may have been that William's hankering was of a sacrificial nature. Continuing his letter to Dr. Rae, Hargrave related a distressing affair that had cast a gloom over York that spring. A fine youth, an assistant in the depot, had by the accidental discharge of his gun killed a little child lying in its cradle. The baby had walked for the first time that morning. The lad was cleared of all blame, but the tragedy affected him so severely that he drowned himself in a water hole cut in the frozen river. "His clothes by the side of the hole," Hargrave wrote, "first told us of his dreadful fate."

Interest in the search for Sir John Franklin and his party was one of the topics of the day, and appeared in Hargrave's letters to the Old Country. The authorities had placed great faith in Dr. Rae's searches, as he was expert in "living off the country"; but Hargrave reported, "No tidings of the fate of Sir John Franklin have yet

reached us. Dr. Rae returned last fall.” Rae was placed in charge of the Mackenzie River District in the winter of 1849-50; and when three copies of his book on his 1846-7 expedition at last reached York, Hargrave forwarded one to him.

The staff at York was preparing for the heaviest shipping season in its history. To recoup their losses and restock the country the Company was sending out two ships and two schooners. Fortunately for Hargrave, William Mactavish arrived back at York just as the first of these, the *Prince Rupert*, hove in sight on August 7. William was “heavier though not stout,” Letitia wrote, but she thought he seemed dull. Captain Herd brought the Company’s fine new ship, the *Prince of Wales*, to anchor in Five Fathom Hole on August 12, carrying twenty more pensioners with their families. These were met by Captain Foss from Red River. During August four vessels arrived and three were “cleared out.”

Hargrave wrote to Alexander Christie on August 31:

The ships reached us, 7, 12, 15, and 24th Inst. and after a struggle unequalled in my experience—we have all safe ashore—the Districts outfitted for the season in what they were still deficient—the North Districts for 1851 fully supplied and the whole at this date shipped off to Norway House. In addition to all these, from 50 to 60 boats from the Settlement have been despatched with their cargoes public and private. The *Rupert* and *Floral* sailed today, the *George* on the 28th and we had barely loaded the *Floral* when I am in the bowels of the General Indent for next Shipment. All this has been accomplished by the earnest and zealous cooperation of the officers and men of this District *alone*, and all wrought as I have never seen them work before. . . . The goods through Canada arrived safely & in quality in my opinion could not have been better, and aided by the fall supplies from this place the Country is as well outfitted as it was used to be in every essential article, and more so than in most articles. The difficulties occasioned by the loss of the

cxxxiv LETTERS OF LETITIA HARGRAVE

Graham have been overcome—our Depot is again full—and from this day our affairs proceed in their former regular channel.

It was while all this turmoil was going on about her that Letitia awaited the birth of her child. She was unable to see any of the visitors this year, but her mind was occupied by the news from Red River, which was a sad shock to all, since the Company's honour was indirectly involved. She received a letter from Anne Pelly saying that she and her husband were being sued for defaming the character of the Company's "first lady" at Fort Garry, Mrs. John Ballenden. Letitia was distressed on Anne Pelly's account, as she was new to the country, and expecting her first baby. Numerous letters and papers on the same subject came to Hargrave. The case disrupted life at Red River for many a day.¹

Letitia was anxious too about her own affairs. She felt that she could not place much reliance on the Governor's promise of removal from York, after their many disappointments, and she feared that something might again happen to change their plans. But another son, born on September 8, soon took all her attention. Hargrave wrote immediately of the event to Kilchrist House, by the *Prince of Wales*, which sailed on September 12. He wrote also to Joseph James, and gave him the news of his new brother, "named Dugald John, for Grandpapa and his brother John." He had earlier told him of the family plans of going to live at Sault Ste. Marie, and now he gave him news of York. "Poor old Garson," he wrote, "is still our cook, and John Annance is now our

¹Donald Ross Papers, Simpson to Ross, April 25, 1851: "I am in hopes that means were adopted to compel Foss to disgorge the £300 so disgracefully obtained from Pelly by what happened at the time, and is now proved to have been a most iniquitous mockery of justice." This case proved to be the finish of Adam Thom's career as a judge.

butler. Do you remember him? He used to run before the cariole when Mama and you used to go out in it during winter.” He informed Joseph James on the topic of the day, saying that there was no news of Sir John Franklin’s fate, but that Dr. Rae was to continue the search, in conjunction with Lieutenant Pullen.

The day after Dugald John was born Captain Herd sent Letitia a present of a boiled chicken. Hargrave wrote a note to thank him for it, “which,” he said, “was prescribed but we were out of such a fowl.” Letitia’s usual health did not return for some length of time. Hargrave later wrote to Ballenden, “I am sorry to say that my dear wife is also far from well. She presented me in September with a fine stout boy, and ever since her health has been delicate. Whatever becomes of me, she and our family go home by the ship next year. The winters in this horrid climate are more than what most Ladies would endure—and more than I should ask from the affection of mine.”

It was, however, with a lighter heart than in many years that Hargrave wrote to his friend Donald Ross on November 1, “All goes well with us within our own gates. The Gude wife is quite restored to her wonted health and strength, and Master ‘Dugald John’ is decidedly the ‘flower of the flock.’ The prospect of so soon escaping from this land of fogs and snow adds wonderfully to our spirits.”¹

1851 On the first of April, 1851, Hargrave addressed Sir George Simpson at Norway House, saying that he would see him there shortly after the arrival of his letter. He had set his affairs in order for the year’s separation from

¹See appendix, p. 298.

his family, and was ready to leave York. He had made all arrangements for Letitia's journey by the ship to England and for her arrival in London, where her sister Florence would meet her. He wrote to Mr. Young at St. Andrews that he wished Joseph James to accompany his aunt to London, "as the boy is most anxious to see the Crystal Palace and other sights." He also wrote to his old friends in Rupert's Land for the last time from York. He advised William McKay, his trusted deputy at Trout lake, to stay with the service as long as he needed its aid, saying "for be assured the only solid and enduring money to be made in this country is that which is registered in its books." He asked Nicol Finlayson when he came to York to look in often on Letitia, as "she will have a solitary summer of it."

The prospect of the long separation was not a happy one for either Letitia or himself, but he would not subject her to the hardships of voyaging in Rupert's Land by taking her with him. Mrs. Duncan Finlayson had visited Norway House with her husband in 1842, when he went there to preside at Council in the Governor's absence, but by "decked vessel," a different matter from the heavy voyaging over the rocks, rapids, and portages, which Hargrave must face. Besides, the opportunity of going home by the large new *Prince of Wales* promised a pleasanter voyage for Letitia than she had before experienced; and it was time for "Tash" to join her brother at school.

June found both the Hargraves still at York, and both almost sick with suspense at the delay, which might portend an entire change of plans. On June 6 Letitia had Hargrave wrapped in shawls against a temperature of thirty-two degrees, "fogs, snow & sleet," with a lame

shoulder and toothache; and he wrote to Donald Ross, "I am still waiting for sailing orders . . . and really in much anxiety about leaving my little family, as Mrs. Hargrave's health is far from being robust, while the pain of our separation will I fear, shake her still further."

At last a letter came from Sir George saying that he was not coming north this season. Council would be held at York, and Governor Colvile would preside. Hargrave's presence was requested as the oldest chief factor who could be there; after which he was to take his departure for Sault Ste. Marie. Hargrave commented, probably with the thought of all the sittings of Council he had not attended, "My assistance . . . has been considered necessary altho from personal convenience I could have willingly dispensed with the honor."

John Ballenden accompanied Governor and Mrs. Colvile to York, and having served until recently at Sault Ste. Marie in the Southern Department, he now met Letitia for the first time. He had heard much of her fortitude, her hospitality, and her charm, and he had been looking forward to meeting her. After being posted to Fort Garry he had written to Hargrave, "I don't know Mrs. Hargrave but present to her my most respectful compliments. I have mentally drawn a sort of portrait of what the Lady ought to be, who, after leaving home could spend ten years at York without a murmur—and I should like to compare the ideal with the real." Letitia and John Ballenden no doubt had at least one topic of great interest in common: life at the Sault.

The sitting of Council began promptly on Governor Colvile's arrival, and immediately after it rose, on July 16, Hargrave left for Sault Ste. Marie. All was in readiness for the long journey ahead of him, since the time was short.

As the boat headed up the Hayes river the guns of the fort on the banks boomed out their parting salute to the man who had for so long ruled York Factory. To Letitia the sound intensified the pain of parting. It ended a chapter in their lives, and spoke of destiny.

William kept Hargrave informed about the news of York and of his family, and Hargrave reported his progress at every opportunity. From Bas de la Rivière, on July 30, he said he was in excellent health and spirits, that things in his portmanteau had got soaking wet on the way and had to be dried, but that the journey was "really one long holiday." On the same day he wrote to Governor Colville, "I enjoy the novelty of the voyage exceedingly from the contrast it bears to the cramped up life I have so long led in York depot. . . . I still hope to be at the Sault on the 20th prox.—the date originally fixed by Sir George." He wrote to Sheriff Mactavish as he travelled along the shores of Lake Superior, and finished the letter at the Sault on August 27, saying "I arrived here late last night all well, but so jaded out with rough weather and want of rest that I am scarcely capable of any exertion. . . . My new home is certainly the best and most beautiful Establishment of our Company which I have beheld. . . . from York Factory hither. . . . The situation is a most beautiful one—steam boats and all the bustle of civilized life are constantly under our eye. Fresh provisions and vegetables are abundant and with my Letitia's excellent taste to put our lodgings into proper order, I feel persuaded the service does not afford a more favorable locality for the comfort and happiness of a family."

William, as usual, had little to say to Hargrave about himself when Letitia and the little ones went off by the ship on September 7: but the home that Letitia had

made, and the companionship of the children, were now for him a thing of the past. Years afterwards, as they were growing up, he wrote, "I always see them as they used to be, Doey with his mixed look of inquisitiveness and astonishment, Tash a termagent, and poor wee Mary Jane pliant and biddable with a gentle trusting kind of look that was the most winning of them all. I suspect Tash will not now stamp her foot and deliver her 'Bad Uncle!' with such emphasis as she used to." And again he wrote, "Mary Jane however is my favorite of them all, though Tash would be indignant if I told them so."

Letitia said nothing in her letters about her departure from York, now that the exile was over. She was leaving the fur-trade of the north, the comings and goings of those who had peopled its stage: John Lee Lewes, English gentleman "with a bit of the bulldog," the last to cling to the ceremonious wearing of side-arms; McPherson the "dandy"; the able red-haired Gladman, with a flash of temper in his eye; volatile Frank Ermatinger, whose valet, a performing negro, obliged gratuitously in Canadian streets; "Good John Tod," who played the flute till he lost his teeth, when he resignedly took to the fiddle; "bluff John Rowand, warm hearted and brave as a lion"; big easy-going Donald Ross, with his slow-growing smile; Clare, the "broad-sterned thick-winded Cockney"; and "stiff upright" James Douglas, whose "high dignified bearing" made him the "Dombey" of the fur-trade. She was leaving the eternal barrenness of York; the deprivations and hardships that had been borne stoically, or ignored. She had been happy, but only, as she herself said, through not thinking. She must have left with mixed emotions; her joy and relief tempered by the sadness of the parting with William and others who had

lightened her isolation, with Wilson and Clare, who had loved the children and been so kind to them. On the way down to the quay they said good-bye to the small pines in the garden that she and the children had nursed to new green each year. And as they left the shore, the schooner passed the little grave of her second son, buried nearly ten years ago on the banks of the creek.

§III. *Later Years*

Letitia's trip home proved to be a happy one, in so far as good company was concerned. Sir George wrote to Donald Ross, "You will be glad to hear of the safe arrival of the Bay ship—the *Prince of Wales* after a fine run of 23 days. There must have been gay doings on board that vessel, with her large party in the cabin of gallant officers and fair ladies—I should think the largest and best assorted live cargo ever shipped from York."

Letitia and Hargrave now enjoyed the frequent correspondence made possible by his change of residence to Sault Ste. Marie. Her letters to him gave her doings in some detail, and through his letters to her she grew to know her new home. He told her in October of Sir George being detained in Canada by Lady Simpson's weak state of health, and added "I heard from him the other day, and he has given his hearty sanction to my visiting New York next spring for the purpose of bringing you hither."

In 1820, when Hargrave had entered the North West Company's service, he had been stationed at Sault Ste. Marie with John Siveright. He now wrote to Siveright, "As you surmised, here I am again like a hunted hare that seeks out the nest from which it first started," and

he spoke of the changes in the thirty years since they were together, "at the very spot from which I write." Sir George had written of the charge at Sault Ste. Marie as being one which required "great activity, command of temper, and habits of business as there is much general work there, contact with the Yankees and all manner of people." Much buying for the Southern Department was also done there; but Hargrave, who had taken up his work in the slack season, told Siveright:

At this place I am I must confess lonely enough. The place affords little occupation for a man that through these last thirty years, has been unremittingly kept on the tenter hooks of native business. I have however considerable resources within myself and feel confident I shall slip through the winter quite comfortably in the hope of a return to my old domestic happiness some nine months hence. All fur trade at this place is at an end. American runners and Rum catch hold of every skin in the way of furs and these as far as I can find out are such rubbish as not to be worth struggling for. Certain it is, all I have yet seen I should have rejected if brought into York Factory for home shipment. Our American neighbours, Military and gentry are civil and courteous—we get on very well together. . . . Returns of this year are greatly over those of 1849 and the handsome dividends from the sales of last year give a stimulus to our spirits which was very much required.

Before the year ended Hargrave had a letter from Sir George, saying that he had had a letter from Webster Simpson, in which he reported that Letitia and her family had arrived in London "after the quickest passage on record from Hudson Bay and that they were to dine with the Simpsons at Stamford Hill that evening accompanied by Mrs. Hargrave's sister. In a former letter he [Webster Simpson] mentioned . . . that during the interval that elapsed between the time of their arrival and the return of the *Prince of Wales*, it had afforded the

family at Stamford Hill great pleasure to be enabled to show some attention to your friends."

1852 January found Letitia at St. Andrews where she had been since November with her two older children. "Tash" was now settled with her brother in Mr. Young's family, and on January 15 Letitia went home to Kilchrist House. Finding that the two younger children were thriving there, she soon set off on a series of visits to friends: to the Loudouns in Glasgow, the Christies near Aberdeen, the Websters at Elgin, and back to the Christies, on her way to St. Andrews for Joseph James's birthday on April 1. She then joined her parents in Edinburgh before going back with them to Kilchrist House.

Hargrave had described in detail to Letitia their new home at Sault Ste. Marie, and had sent her a floor plan of it, and advised some purchases in London for the house. One other purchase he suggested: "a fine silk velvet gown worthy of being worn by such a wife as you have been to me." He told her of new friends at the Sault, whom he thought she would like, and of some who were tiresome; of driving on the frozen river; and of his home life: "My daily routine when confined to the fort is of the quietest and dullest. I rise at a little past eight—breakfast at 9—on tea and toast or porridge and milk—dine at 2 on Barley broth and boiled beef—and . . . tea follows at ½ past 6. The evening is very lonely—having no books and wanting you—so I slide off to bed at 9—read till ten and then dream of you and the little ones till morning. I sleep well however—have a good appetite and in short am quite well. My weight however continues

to decrease and I am sure I am now considerably under 200 pounds."

To "Tash", now aged six, he wrote:

We have a fine horse and sleigh in which we drive out almost every day. This is far more pleasant than a dog cariole and the sleigh will hold both Mama and me as well as Bab and Buffy. It goes far faster than the cariole and the bells on the harness make a pretty sound. I think that good Mama will be very happy here. . . . Our horse is called Don and it is a pretty brown and greyish color. He is very docile and will come to me in the field and eat a piece of biscuit from my hand. . . . We have also two cows, two oxen, a few hens and some ducks and I wish we had Mary Clarke to see they are properly fed, for the half breed boys here are very careless and if Papa doesn't take care they neglect to feed them. We shall have plenty of eggs next spring and little chickens. Long exiled from pleasant surroundings, and envisioning his family's future, his heart was speaking as he went on, "Oh, this is a far warmer place than York Factory and during the summer many steamers come up to us from Canada and many ladies and gentlemen visit the Falls on parties of pleasure. When you grow a tall girl and have finished your education, you may perhaps see this place also."

Letitia made a last visit to St. Andrews in May, expecting to sail in June, but she did not get away until July 1. Her husband met her in New York as arranged, and after some delay they arrived at Sault Ste. Marie. No doubt Hargrave had pictured that home-coming many times, and it was with heartfelt earnestness that he had written to his old friend Donald Ross, "When I have my little family gathered around me again . . . I trust the rulers of my destiny will not think of removing me while I continue to retain an interest in the fur trade."¹

¹See appendix, p. 300.

Letitia found her new home on the north bank of the St. Mary's river as Hargrave had described it, "in a pleasant situation although in summer our space for exercise is not more extensive than [illegible] at York, from the thickets and rocks that bar us in on every side. The house fronts the S. E. having a pretty Bay before the doors, and the Falls of St. Mary within half a mile on the right, the distinct sound of which lulls one to rest through the still air of night."

The house stands today, Sault Ste. Marie's oldest residence. Built of stone, it has walls two feet thick and deep window embrasures, quaint hand-made doors, and spacious halls with broad easy stair-cases even to the third floor. Standing in the front doorway one looks down the hall and glimpses through a door at the other end an attractive garden. Hargrave had written to Letitia the previous September, "Roses are not to be had at the Sault, and cucumbers, melons, apples and other fruits are at present only to be got hold of by steamers from Detroit." Letitia had therefore brought out seeds and roots, which no doubt were planted in this garden behind the house, as it was the only possible place, at the time, in which to make one.

There was difficulty in procuring servants, as the Americans across the river offered higher wages. When Hargrave first arrived he had reported, "I have as yet only one as Cook, waiting man, cow keeper, groom and general caterer," but he had since been able to add to his domestic staff; and Mary Clarke had come out with Letitia again. Letitia brought out carpets for her parlour, which was fifteen by sixteen feet in size, and for their bedroom, which was thirteen by fifteen feet. Hargrave had furnished their bedroom with bed, "sopha,"

table, and two chairs bought in Upper Canada (probably in Toronto). One chair, for Letitia's comfort, was a rocking chair. Her piano, with other household goods, had had to come from York *via* England, and Hargrave had assured her about its care once at Sault Ste. Marie, as "two professional piano tuners visit the place each summer."

Hargrave had had a small pleasure boat built, as there was no other route to the American side than by water, and he felt by having this Letitia's "comforts were doubled." "I am rather a smart hand now," he wrote, "as a steersman myself, and also in our flat bottomed tubs am quite a pilot among the rough waters at the foot of the Falls."

Including the Americans, the Hargraves found a "nice little society" at the Sault. There were water excursions in summer, and driving on the ice in winter, when their beautiful musk-ox robes from Churchill were much admired. "I can assure you," Hargrave had written to Letitia, "my turnout is one of the first in the settlement... and altho' a little out of practise, I am gradually acquiring the fame of an experienced whip."

- 1853 Sault Ste. Marie being on a main route of travel, the Hargraves had many summer visitors, Company people going to and fro. Among these was Igneabitam, who had been their Indian servant when Letitia first went to York, and who was now leaving the service of George Gladman, with a nice bank balance, and retiring to Red River. On his trips West Sir George was partially outfitted at the Sault, where luxuries could be obtained, and where he usually ordered fresh butter and hams and "two or three turkeys."

The Hargraves had not been forgotten at York. William, Clare and Wilson wrote with regularity. Simple good-hearted Wilson recorded every small doing there for their benefit. He wrote of Letitia as "my much esteemed and never to be forgotten friend Mrs. Hargrave," and said that the many kindnesses she and the children and Hargrave had shown him "will be remembered as long as I live."

Lady Simpson, who had been in failing health for some time, died in March, 1853. Letitia felt her death a real loss, as they had been friends since the day they first met, and they had corresponded until her last illness. Two months after her death, Duncan Finlayson, just returned from England, wrote to Hargrave, "Sir George starts tomorrow for the Sault. . . . Mrs. Finlayson and myself arrived here on the 22nd of last month and the meeting with the inmates of this house was truly distressing and with none more so than the bereaved husband himself who feels his sad loss keenly—but I hope the journey on which he is about to start will tend to divert his thoughts from dwelling too frequently upon it, as he cannot now revert to the subject without the deepest emotion."

Sir George, therefore, made his first visit to the Hargraves in their new home under these circumstances, and no doubt they did their utmost to cheer him. He had shown himself most kind to Letitia about her visit home, and in spite of business differences there had never been a rift in the friendship between the two families. Simpson was looking worn and old. Hargrave could not but feel the toll that time was taking among his old associates: Donald Ross had died the previous

December, Dr. Todd and others were gone also, and now he found the Governor an old man.¹

1854 Settled in the routine of Sault Ste. Marie, Hargrave outfitted in June 1854 the party of the Reverend John Ryerson, who was undertaking a missionary tour to York Factory in the interests of the Wesleyan Church. Letitia entertained him and his party, and she seemed to have been especially kind to the Reverend R. Brooking and his young wife, who were to be left in the north as missionaries. She was probably very useful to Mrs. Brooking, knowing as she did the life to which she was going. Mr. Ryerson wrote later of the "noble hospitality of Mr. H. and his excellent lady with whom our party had the pleasure of taking dinner before going on board the schooner."²

Only two years were given to Letitia and James Hargrave in which to enjoy the pleasantness of life at Sault Ste. Marie. In September, 1854, Letitia was stricken by cholera, which was still taking a terrible toll throughout the country. It did its deadly work so quickly that, though not feeling well, she had not yet taken to her bed when the end came. On September 18, after only a few days' indisposition, she died, sitting in her rocking-chair where so often she had sat to read or sew.

¹Replying on November 8, 1853, to a comment from Hargrave upon Sir George's aging, Edward Ermatinger wrote: "We look in vain for many familiar faces. Our old bourgeois, John George McTavish, may now in heaven be looking serenely upon the turbid streams of worldly ambition. . . . Donald Ross with his quiet face has copied his last letter; Dr. Todd can shrug his shoulders no more—one common fate awaits us all. . . . Our old Chief, Sir George, as you describe him, tottering under the infirmities of age, has seen his best days. His light canoe, with choice of men, and of women too! can no longer administer to his gratification."

²Ryerson, *Hudson's Bay* (Toronto, 1855), p. 5.

Beside her, on her dressing-table, lay the *New Testament* and *Hymnal* which she had used since her girlhood days at Leswalt School in 1831, and in which Hargrave later inscribed, "My Darling's favorite Copy."

Very kind words about Letitia came to Hargrave from Sir George Simpson and many others. Duncan Finlayson wrote, "Mrs. Finlayson and myself felt deeply grieved to hear of the sad, very sad loss, you have sustained in the death of your good, kind, amiable and affectionate wife. A loss which Mrs. Finlayson feels as keenly as if it were a near and dear relative of her own; for since their acquaintance, they kept up, undiminished, that friendly intercourse which exists between intimate and attached friends." George Deschambault of Isle à la Crosse wrote that the news of Hargrave's "irreparable loss" affected him greatly. "And I may say," he continued, "that I took a share in your sufferings. It was natural that I should do so after having enjoyed a long acquaintance with that ever to be lamented Good Lady. She was goodness and Benevolence itself, and deserved the respect, esteem and affection of every one."

Another tragedy now followed for James Hargrave. Death had not withdrawn from his threshold. On December 8, Letitia's baby, Dugald John, "the flower of the flock," followed his mother. Broken and stunned by the double blow, Hargrave felt he could not stay at Sault Ste. Marie. He decided to retire, and to take Mary Jane, the one child now left with him in Canada, to her grand-parents in Scotland. In the summer of 1855 he was given a furlough, prior to the acceptance of his resignation; whereupon he sold the whole contents of his house to his successor, Wemyss Simpson, and set off for Scotland with Mary Jane and the faithful Mary Clarke.

His mind during the voyage was naturally upon recent events. The first letter he wrote back to Canada was one to Wemyss Simpson, asking to buy back from him Letitia's rocking-chair. He said he wanted it for Letitia's mother; and his directions as to the packing and shipping of this precious memento, in their minuteness of detail, reveal his heart. He reached Glasgow on July 27, where, similarly to his arrival in London in 1846, sad news awaited him. The Sheriff had died suddenly at Kilchrist House on July 20, and Mrs. Mactavish was in Edinburgh in delicate health.

He wrote from Edinburgh on September 12 to Dr. Buckmaster Brown, a friend in Boston, relating events since his arrival. "The first lines I received from my relations here," he said, "apprised me that my father in law had expired 4 days before we reached Liverpool and that the family anxiously awaited my presence in Argyllshire to superintend the funeral, the whole of his five sons being in the Colonies at present. This duty occupied me until about the 20th Ult. when I hurried thither to console my poor mother in law. . . . I found her in health and was received with open arms—yet in the midst of life we are in death! The good old lady was in a few days attacked by severe diarrhoea and eight days after my arrival she breathed her last sigh in my arms."

Hargrave now received his first letter from William since Letitia's death. "I have before now," he wrote, "made two or three attempts to answer your melancholy letters of last September and December but could not. . . . I will not dwell upon the painful theme or the very miserable spring I passed, God knows how sincerely I sympathized with you in your losses and from my own feelings I can judge of yours. I hope however now that

you have got away from St. Marys that your grief will have become less severe, while there [you] could not have borne your trials calmly, but I doubt not that your own firmness and meeting again with the children will do more for you than any thing else could." William had hoped to go on furlough and meet Hargrave at home, which hope, he said, had been "a comfort in many a bitter moment for associations made everything around me distasteful. . . . So hateful is everything to me that I will not remain a day longer than may be necessary to my own credit." Of the children he said, "Poor little souls, their loss, after all, is the heaviest."

Florence Mactavish's aid with the children was invaluable, but she became ill from overstrain; so Hargrave applied for another year's furlough, that he might remain in Scotland. Sir George said in reply to his request that he had promised to relieve William Mactavish of York, and could not do so unless Hargrave would go back there this year. The time had come when Hargrave could repay his debt to William. He went back to York, facing the ordeal with gratitude in his heart for the two years of happiness William had given him with Letitia at the Sault. He consented to go for one year only, on the grounds that Florence Mactavish's health was broken and he could not ask her to take the responsibility of his children for a longer period. Hargrave spent two years at York, however, not one, as he had stipulated. The time was lightened only by the proximity of his old friends George Barnston at Norway House, and William Mactavish for a time at Red River. William wrote from Scotland in March, 1857, that he had begged to go back to York to let Hargrave get away, but that Sir George would not allow

it.¹ He needed him elsewhere, he had said. This, much to William's dismay, proved to be Red River. He disliked the place that had always given York, overburdened with the Company's affairs, so much trouble by its demands. He left London for Red River on July 3, 1857. On arriving there he sent Hargrave his last news of the children. "I had letters from Joseph at Edinburgh," he said, "and from Flora at Lausanne. . . . All was well with Tash and Mary Jane. Flora speaks highly of Lausanne and thinks Tash will benefit much in her studies this summer. Joseph stands high in Captain Orr's opinion and is generally well informed for his years. He I think will be a very steady man and I have no doubt will turn out well. I noticed him particularly last winter and have scarcely ever met with a boy of more correct feeling."

Hargrave left York for the last time in 1858, and returned to Scotland. He found Florence Mactavish's health so delicate that she could not continue the care of his children. He renewed his acquaintance with Margaret Alcock, a cousin of Edward Clouston of Stromness, whom he had met in 1856, and married her the following year. She was a woman of fine character and charming personality.

Hargrave still felt convinced, as he had when a lad, that Canada offered a better future for young people than the older countries; and just as he long ago had

¹William Mactavish to Hargrave, Edinburgh, March 30, 1857: "...in the face of this however I made an attempt to support your plans by returning to York myself—Sir George however shut me up at once, by telling me . . . that from a scarcity of officers you must just remain at York—besides says he the *Directors* are not willing to give leave of absence with such short intervals as has been given in too many cases before—my own opinion is that Sir George could not even if he tried just now carry this point, they make severe remarks on his favoritism in the case of the Finlaysons."

urged his father to take his family there, he now decided to do the same with his own. He retired, as from 1860; and in 1859, with his new wife, his two daughters, and the ever-faithful Mary Clarke, he set out for Canada. Joseph James remained behind to finish his education as a surveyor, and was to follow in a year or so. Hargrave was not successful in obtaining the post he had in view for Joseph James as surveyor at Red River. Developments at this juncture had made the Hudson's Bay Company's future in Rupert's Land uncertain. In 1861, Joseph James went to Red River, not as surveyor, but as an apprentice clerk, under his uncle William Mactavish.¹ Mactavish, in the meantime, had married Andrew McDermot's fourth daughter, Sarah, and in 1860 he had reported to Hargrave the birth of a son, "a thundering chap," whom he named James.

On their arrival in Canada, the Hargraves lived at 95 Bloor Street, Yorkville (Toronto) for a year, while they decided upon a permanent home. This they finally found at Brockville, where Hargrave bought Burnside House, situated on a high cliff bordering the St. Lawrence River. From here Hargrave corresponded with his own family near Montreal. On January 11, 1865, four months before he died, he wrote a budget of family news to his nephew there. He spoke of Mary Jane, whose education had now been completed in Toronto, as

a sweet gentle and pretty lassie in her seventeenth year. . . . Her sister Letitia "Tash" was married to Mr. Schofield a barrister practising in Brockville and is now comfortably settled with him in a very pretty villa, within little more than three miles of us— which residence together with offices, garden, grapery, orchard and

¹For an account of his trip out, see J. J. Hargrave, *Red River* (Montreal, 1871), pp. 17-68. For a glimpse of him at Red River, see Cowie, *The Company of Adventurers*, pp. 151-4.

some seventy acres of excellent pasture was presented to her by her father-in-law as a marriage gift.

The marriage fete was a matter of great importance no doubt to the young folks and to 'Mama' but sadly deranged the quiet tenor of my every day life. The ceremony was performed in St. Peters Church, Brockville from whence we were accompanied hither by about one hundred of our friends in twenty-four carriages where they were entertained "with a sumptuous dinner composed of the delicacies of the season," as a "penny a line" would say. My personal pleasure in all this was the dessert composed of upwards of seventy pounds of the finest grapes—part of the produce of my own Grapery which I had [illegible] and planted since my arrival here. They were declared by some of my friends—the Hon. George Crawford and they who partook of them—as the finest they had seen this year in Canada—and as several of them also had graperies the praise might on the whole be considered disinterested. From such trifles can a mind at ease, draw its quiet pleasures.

The young pair left for Washington in the afternoon and my guests finally left in high glee after having discussed among other good things, almost every bottle of a case of champagne which I had procured from the London Docks for the occasion. So much for one of the "stepping stones" in life—but I love better the quiet and solitude of my every day existence.

We are indeed very free, once more, for another of those Fetes was the "Last night of the auld year" on which occasion our table was surrounded by a crowd of our relatives and friends, among others, two uncles of my children who had come, one from Red River Settlement and the other from Washington to be present at our meeting.¹

James Hargrave died on May 16, 1865, old and worn out at sixty-seven. He had buried Letitia and Dugald John in St. James's cemetery, in Toronto, since there was no consecrated ground at Sault Ste. Marie at that time, and he was buried beside them.²

¹James Hargrave to John Hargrave, January 11, 1865. This letter is in the possession of Mrs. J. H. Schofield, Trail, B.C.

²After the death of James Hargrave, his wife took Mary Jane on a visit to

I found their graves on a hill overlooking the lovely Don valley. It was a summer day, and bright sunshine sifted down through the trees in a tremulous pattern upon the tomb. There were trees Letitia knew as a child, the rowan, the oak, and the elm, their branches stirring softly in a quiet breeze. Nearby was a wild currant bush such as grew stuntedly at York, while not far away, over the brow of the hill, fluttered a white birch—the tree of the country's beginnings, the tree of the pioneer.

The house in which Letitia had lived at York, with her sitting-room, the mess, and the nursery, the place she had made an oasis in that crude country, remained much as she left it, and was used as the chief officer's residence until 1934, when it was demolished. One of the pines that Letitia and the children had treasured in the garden grew until it towered high above the big depot, when, after a long life, it died. Letitia's descendants still cherish a few mementos of her; the little *New Testament* that lay on her table, and the rocking-chair in which she died.

Scotland. On the voyage they met the ship's surgeon, Dr. Alexander Ogston, later Sir Alexander Ogston. He married Mary Jane Hargrave in 1867. She died after the birth of her fourth child, in 1873. Hargrave's other daughter Letitia (or "Tash") died in 1880; and in 1881 her step-mother took her three little girls to live in Edinburgh. She used to take them to visit their grand-aunt, Florence Mactavish, by this time an old and rather austere lady, living at Leamington. Hargrave's son Joseph James served in the Hudson's Bay Company at Red River under his uncle William Mactavish until the latter's death in 1870; and he wrote his history, *Red River*, under his uncle's eye. He rose in the service to a chief tradership in 1879, and he retired to Montreal in 1889. He went to Scotland to visit his step-mother, and died shortly afterwards, on February 22, 1894.

Letitia's brother Dugald Mactavish died in Montreal, where he was stationed, in 1871. Her brother Alexander died in Australia; but the other brother, Lockhart, used to come from Australia to spend the winters with James Hargrave's second wife and the children of "Tash."



MAP SHOWING THE LOCATION OF YORK FACTORY
AND OTHER POSTS

THE LETTERS OF LETITIA HARGRAVE

1. TO JAMES HARGRAVE¹

Kilchrist² Monday 18th Mar 1838

My Dear Mr Hargrave

Papa has already told you that your letters did not arrive here till the 12th of March. I have suffered a very great deal from your having had to leave Britain without an answer and nearly as much from the dread that you would very naturally accuse us of great heartlessness in hesitating at such a crisis. Had I had the slightest hope that my writing at that time would have insured your hearing a day earlier than by the present opportunity, I would certainly have run the risk of involving you in the pains and penalties attached to misprision of treason, as I can tell you that Governor Simpson would not have been made honorable mention of. I have however outlived my wrath, although I cannot see the justice of sending you off before they decide whether or not you will sail. I am satisfied however that Papa's letter, hurried though it was, would arrive to reassure you of his own and mama's sentiments and I fear that your considerate advice to say nothing and hear all I can was not so rigidly followed by me as to warrant my now indulging in any formalities on the subject. As far as I know I was quite reserved, but lest you may think otherwise I must remind you of your friend Cowper's notion of the policy in question. I wish Mama had taken the same view of the case as she was seized with a very prosaic fit of curiosity and caution saying that I seemed indifferent &c. and that I ought to tell her so at once. It would have moved your compassion to see me brought down from a very sublime state of resignation to make most undignified

¹This letter is in answer to letters 2 and 3 in the appendix, pp. 272.5.

²See introduction, p. xx.

admissions. Papa never fashed me with any questions. And now I must tell you how much I feel your whole conduct in this matter. I have never had a moment's uneasiness except at being the cause of annoyance to you, and from the fear that you may suffer from what you have to endure before getting to your factory. I will not be happy till we hear.

If you do not write yourself from Canada I daresay you will see Dugald¹ and he will let us know how you got on so far. We had letters from him about a month ago, devoted exclusively to his own, his aunt's² and your praise, and a noisy vituperation of wheel carriages. I remember the time when he thought a landau cart an extremely comfortable conveyance. He gives an interesting description of his own appearance, congratulating himself on having a size of head that a man of 7 feet would be proud of.

We likewise heard from John³ about the same time assuring us of his complete recovery from a fever which had kept him in a state of delirium for six weeks. This is fearful to us but he speaks of it very coolly and seems much delighted with the prospect of frightening the negroes in his militia coat, and superintending them boiling sugar. They must be in a pleasant state if they require as he says the whole militia turned out every holiday to keep them in subjection.

Papa brought Lockhart home on Wednesday much to the satisfaction of the world in general as he is a very popular character. Alexander is repining at his own youth which prevents him from getting straps like Lockie who makes very vainglorious display of a pair he has just acquired. Alex. thinks it unjust that one boy should be bigger than another.

Captain Tom Campbell had the politeness to walk part of the way from town with me, he was very ill for several weeks after you saw him but is now restored. Charlotte and I have fought a pitched battle on an average once a week since that time but are

¹Letitia's brother Dugald Mactavish, then stationed at Lachine. For biography see E. E. Rich (ed.), *McLoughlin's Fort Vancouver letters, second series, 1839-44* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1943), pp. 397-8.

²Catherine Turner, wife of John George McTavish, Lake of Two Mountains, near Montreal. She is also referred to by Letitia as "Mrs. John George," "Aunt John," or "Mrs. John McTavish."

³Letitia's brother John George Mactavish, who was in the sugar trade at Tobago, West Indies, where he died in 1859.

excellent friends notwithstanding. She informed me confidentially that she had a feud with her sister Mary that they had not spoken for two days even to wish each other good night that this had never happened before and was in consequence of something she had said to Mary. I advised her to speak—if she did not like the ceremony of asking her sister's pardon but she said she would do neither. I would never have observed the coolness had she not told me, as they look quite sweet upon one another and I cannot imagine them sitting constantly in one room together without uttering a word.

Polly would be in downright horror if she thought I had written so long without thanking you for your very beautiful presents. I feel that it would be mockery for me to say more when I cannot persuade myself to enlarge on other things. I made my first appearance with chain and reticule at Tom's marriage and my vanity was considerably elated by the admiration they met with. The minister assured me I had a most imposing effect, and Sam Campbell admitted my bag was much grander than his cousin Maggie Mactavish's. I will write in Willie's¹ box and tell you part and parcel of the wedding.

I will not cross my letter more than to assure you that I do estimate very highly the value of your affection and that if my presence will be of any comfort to you, leaving society will be little or no sacrifice on my part. I will send this away today if Willie's letters are too late. It is Papa's fault, not ours Polly says, if she has time she will write you but she is very occupied with work being in the midst of sewing a collar for Mr^s John George. I am joined by Mama and her in love to you and believe me,

very affectionately yours

LETITIA MACTAVISH

¹Letitia's brother, William Mactavish (1815-1870), who entered the Hudson's Bay Company's service in 1833, became chief trader in 1847, and chief factor in 1851. He served at Norway House, 1833-4; at York Factory, 1834-6; at Fort Garry, 1836-7; at York Factory, 1837-48; at Sault Ste. Marie, 1848-50; at York Factory, 1850-6; and at Fort Garry, 1857-70. He was governor of Assiniboia, 1858-64, and governor of Rupert's Land, 1864-70. Upon his father's death in 1855 he inherited the Chiefship of Clan Tavish, but he never matriculated.

6 LETTERS OF LETITIA HARGRAVE

2. TO JAMES HARGRAVE

[*fragment*]¹

I wish you were here with us now—the weather is beautiful and the country in a very different state from that in which you saw it— I was out this morning before the gowans were opened and M^r Wordsworth and his disciple Charlotte would have renounced the lesser Celandine if they had seen how ugly it looked sleeping at $\frac{1}{2}$ past five. I have taken a new whim—and weary for you now— This appears a pleasant change to Mama and Polly who have been plagued ever since I left the school room with my croaking for our cousin Mary Hamilton. As I have now got the length of boldly saying I would like to see you they must consider their present state as a sort of emancipation—

Papa was in Edin^h the other day and saw poor Mary in her bed room recovering from a fever— Her brother Robert flirting with all his might with an heiress who has a red head and what is worse is called Thally— I have heard that she is the most obnoxious of women and no one can tell why or wherefore— She has travelled much and is very clever but has not the sense to bear her honors meekly— I hope she will marry Bob as it will be a good thing for his sisters—if the principals should kill one another it will be on either side merely justifiable homicide. It is time I should stop for I am leaving out half my words—

M^r Loudoun has given Lockhart the whole library of entertaining knowledge—so that I am very busy & am waxing every hour stronger and stronger in L^d Broughams defence— Papa had a proclamation sent him intimating that the coronation is put off till the 28th.² I wonder people can be such fools as to cavil at any solemnity or other thing taking place on the anniversary of a mans death— It seems to be equally right that the kingdom should be 24 hours without a sovereign as it is surely quite as shocking for the heir to mount the throne an hour after the King's death as to be crowned on the ninth anniversary— They have done well to

¹Only a portion of this letter was preserved. It is endorsed by Hargrave "Kilchrist House—16 May 1838, L. Mactavish—Recd at YF—Augt. answered in Sept. 1838."

²Queen Victoria's coronation was evidently first fixed to take place on June 26, the eighth anniversary of the death of George IV.

postpone it but the objection was very ridiculous. It has first and last been the occasion of lots of fighting which is very agreeable to those who like it.

Papa sets out to Edin^h in a few hours— We have got a new Lord Advocate—the last we had has lost his only child and got into bad spirits— M^r Rutherford¹ is the very image of Mephistopheles a most hideous looking man and I wonder at papa's valor in going near him— Mama was very unwell yesterday today she is better but I doubt whether she will be able to write to William— It is only cold I hope—altho' severe while it lasts— We had a visit from a D^r Colin Mactavish in Isla who is very anxious to go to Canada— He has some money and has had a quarrel with M^r Campbell of Isla— His great object is to make £ 12,000 in ten years and come back again— This intimation was too much for our gravity so with one consent we all laughed aloud and he proceeded to unfold his schemes which were too numerous for my memory— He was to practise medicine himself to take out one man as a tailor another a distiller and 3rd to take charge of his farm— Regularly every day the argument was renewed & I think he is convinced that he will not succeed in his wise design. We used to feel an interest in him: he sighed and looked so heartbroken that we imagined it was for the loss of his wife who died 4 years ago— He came back [this time] looking as doleful as ever and we were a little fatigued at the duration of his mourning— All our sympathy vanished however when we were informed that he had met with *one* refusal at the very least—the lady was married a few days before he made his appearance here—

Papa will see this on board a steamer at Leith— Be you sure to send your ship away in time— I will become peripatetic in Octo^r as I always go for the letters— I mean when we begin to expect them— I suppose I need not write till Jan^y next. It frightens me to look so long forward—and I cant help marvelling at my courage in answering a letter that was written so long ago as yours— M^{rs} Worsley told us as a new and remarkable piece of intelligence that you were to be back in 2 years— I have made up my great mind never to mention your name to a single person— When the lieges ask if you are married I tell them with an artlessness that would do honor to a better Cause that I never had the curiosity

¹Andrew Rutherford (1791-1854) was appointed Lord Advocate in 1839.

8 LETTERS OF LETITIA HARGRAVE

to enquire— In truth I always thought you were & was certain Willie spoke of some lady who must have been elsewhere.

I wish you heard the cuckoo and the rails— They must have been refreshing their voices with a slight refection of tar water as no natural pipe could make such a continued hubbub day & night. I will now bring this epistle to . . .

3. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

Liverpool Wednesday 29th April 1840

My Dear Mama,

We reached the Queen's Arms about $\frac{1}{2}$ past 5—we left Greenock about $\frac{1}{2}$ past 11—or perhaps 12 for I was sound asleep—and am not sure—and we were plagued by being obliged to go into a wee steamer [or] we should not have been here shortly after 4. As it was we had an excellent passage. Although there was great confusion owing to its being the first voyage of the *Admiral* which is built on the model of the *British Queen*—¹ I never saw anything like the tremendous machinery. There were a great number of passengers both ladies and gentlemen the fare is altogether 9/- I am wearying to hear how Polly and Alex are and will expect a letter from Flora as soon as possible. My head ached badly all day. I went to bed soon having eat only a little bit of cake and an orange all day. Hargrave took supper and suffered severely from sickness and headache. Tom Ogilvy has taken up his quarters here till we leave, which we mean to do on Friday at 8 a.m. I dont like the appearance of Liverpool, it is very dark even in the day and now looking out of the windows the lamps are at a much greater distance even than Edinburgh. This room is very warm although there is no fire— I need not write again till we reach London— We will tell you everything then that we see or hear.

It appeared as if a party of young men had been sent down to make a noise in the boat as the strapado they made both at supper last night and at luncheon this afternoon was frightful. M^r Fergusson from New Brunswick came on board at Greenock. He was most attentive and agreeable and what with Tom Ogilvy and

¹The *Admiral* was built for coastal service between Glasgow and Liverpool. The *British Queen* was the largest ship then afloat.

him we got on most comfortably altho' the hubbub of the Glasgow men kept me and all the other women out of the cabin. I never in my most fanciful moments could imagine such brutality, they got up cheered and broke their glasses. As we (meaning M^r H. Fergusson and I) were in a distant part of the cabin we could not ascertain the cause of the clamour but it turned out that they were sent down to puff the boat and give it a character for which purpose they drank champagne.

I shall write Flora and Polly next. I enclose a few lines for Papa. Charlotte got excessively lively before she left the *Nimrod*. With kindest love from us both to Papa and all the others believe me ever in the greatest haste

your m. aff.

L H

4. TO MARY MACTAVISH

London Saturday
2 May 1840

My dear Polly—

We arrived here *viz* George & Vulture¹ at 7 o'clock last even^g after an agreeable drive thro' the streets in a coach—London is not so ugly as I expected. We left Liverpool Station at a $\frac{1}{4}$ past 8 A.M and reached the London one² at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 6 or nearly so—It was an unusually long train, 200 feet long & immensely heavy—We paid £ 5 for our 2 tickets, and our luggage being weighed *except* my dressing case carpet bag & *hams* we were allowed lbs 100 each & had to pay 2^d per lb above that, w^{ch} amounted to thirty shillings—You had as well remember this as people often take more than is needful. Altogether we have expended since we left home precisely £14—& at least our bag^e cost £2— I suppose you w^d get my Liverpool letter. Tell Mama I have picked off all my haps, it is so fearfully hot, but I must try & describe the G^r & Vul^e. We drove for 3 miles from the station passed St Pauls Newgate & the

¹See introduction, pp. xxviii-xxix; also Charles Dickens, *The posthumous papers of the Pickwick Club* (London, 1902), p. 285, *passim*; and Margaret Arnett MacLeod, "The George and Vulture" (To be published in *The Beaver*, December, 1947).

²Euston station, terminus of the London and North Western Railway.

Mansion house & shortly after the coach entered a sort of long narrow Court down from Lombart st & there was the G⁵ at the bottom of it a large black house— Hargrave *would* have his dinner tho it was 8 before we were ready—

While he was working with the luggage the landlady¹ sailed into my room but as I thought she looked very patronizing & being wearied & rather cross I was stately too & *malgre* all my own exertions I could not help being repulsive & disagreeable so after a polite speech she retired. When Hargrave came up he mentioned that she had asked if I had ever been in town before & on hearing not, she said it might please me to see a little society & she & her sons w^d feel honored if I would *look* in on them for ½ an hour— I w^d not as I c^d not be bothered dressing for such a purpose when I was just at the fainting & I said I must run to my bed. Think of my rage & grief when a very nice looking woman who is upper serv^t told me her mistress had sent her to enquire if I w^d like to see the table. On my going with her she took me 1st into a large room arranged for dancing & then showed me another with a most magnificent supper laid out for upwards of 100 !!! I never saw anything like it & fear I never will again. I eat my dinner with a heavy heart & Hargrave sent me off to my bed, where I was scarcely deposited till the carriages arrived & I cannot tell y^u the number of times I was out & in— Only one could enter at a time & such a host as there were— I w^d not have been 2 minutes in my bed till midnight had I not been disgusted by several gentlemen arriving by themselves in a cab and as I c^d not distinguish between that conveyance & a coach I was exasperated at their imposing upon me as there was of course nothing remarkable about them save the extreme whiteness of their gloves— The Ladies were well worth the risk of catching a little cold. The flower wreaths in their hair & the grandeur of their gowns were displayed by the bright light of the lamps over the door and as each waited coolly in the court bare neck arms & all till she arranged herself I had lots of time to admire— A coach always contained at least 2 ladies & 2 gentⁿ & occasionally 5 or 6 came out. On seeing a magnificent matron with plenty of silver in a blue turban & a gorgeous looking *pink* satin gown I had nearly lost all self command & rushed into the lobby for a nearer view— Altho

¹Mrs. Warriner.

they danced & supped on the same flat with us they were so recherché that we were not at all disturbed & heard nothing but the music w^{ch} being a good band was agreeable & hushed me to sleep— I have not recovered my sorrow at not knowing that it was not a private tea party. The fete was in honor of the marriage of her son & I much fear Boz¹ w^d be there.

I am wearying to hear how you are and am almost afraid to write in case it may find you ill— I am all shaking a dingling sort of feeling being over me with the motion of the [railway] carriage. Altho' it was very comfortable. We took a longer time than usual— Y^u w^d never suppose y^u were moving more rapidly than in a stage coach. I looked at my watch & found that it progressed 10 miles in 22 minutes when there was no stoppage & 10 minutes longer when they did stop to get supplies of fuel & water. At the same time we sometimes went for several minutes at the rate of 34 miles an hour.

There was a grand fancy Charity ball at Liverpool. Tom paid a guinea for a ticket & another for the lone of a dress & went with some Brazil friends— I have a very donsy look out from my windows & see nothing but black brick walls & a few unfortunate caged birds out at the windows *enjoying the fresh air*— I will write often of course but if I get hold of papers let Flora examine in case I may have any little thing to say². If y^u saw the cloud of smoke seen over the city at the distance of 8 miles. Old M^r Stuart³ is here blackguarding the Queen for dismissing the beautiful Lady Fanny Cooper because Prince Albert spoke to her on approaching the Altar at his marriage— She was disbanded next day.

Make Locky write if y^u cant—Hargrave joins me in love to you all. I am going out to see the world in a Bus as I am very feckless on my feet & wearied myself out in 2 hours at Liverpool

¹Since the appearance of Charles Dickens's *Posthumous papers of the Pickwick Club*, in twenty instalments in 1836-7, it had become well known that he frequented the "George and Vulture."

²Personal messages were frequently written on the margins of newspapers, as postage rates for letters were high.

³After forty years spent in the fur-trade in Rupert's Land, John Stuart had retired in 1839. For biography see E. E. Rich (ed.), *Journal of occurrences in the Athabasca Department by George Simpson* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1938), p. 469.

w^{ch} is as moully a looking place as I w^d wish to see. I will write Flora now & Papa & Mama next time as I hope to have seen some thing or other.

L. H.

5. TO FLORENCE MACTAVISH

London Saturday 2nd May 1840

My Dear Flora,

I have just finished a long letter to Polly. I did not recover from a sort of stupefaction till I was fairly on the railway and I have not yet subsided. The first striking sight I saw as we drove through the streets last night was a Turk bare-footed dressed in his own costume and very fanciful and dainty it was. While I was writing the Governor¹ called, he is a good-natured happy-looking, dumpy man, and is to see tomorrow whether his wife is to come to me or I am to go down the river to see her. I have been out and got several small items but have not yet made up my great mind on the subject of a bonnet. I have been up the length of the whispering gallery and great bell of St. Pauls. Sorry to say I would much have preferred sallying up and down the streets. Hargrave sauntered for an hour in Paternoster Row which is full of book-sellers' shops. He very nearly purchased a copy of the Douay Bible but after he had entered the shop and had it in his hand he took a remorse and left it. The shop was one for the sale of Catholic publications. All the more notorious of their doctrinal works are set out ostentatiously in the windows and the one in question among the rest. I saw Longman's &c. and did not wonder at poor Jeannie Worsley leaving the premises the smell of leather even in the street is insufferable. I am so w[e]aried that it will bother you to read my letter, I am shaking so much partly with *railing* and as much with this day's fatigue and exertion.

I was much delighted with the appearance of the country yesterday from L.pool to London it is all trees with multitudes

¹George Simpson, governor of the Hudson's Bay Company in Rupert's Land. See A. S. Morton, *Sir George Simpson, overseas governor of the Hudson's Bay Company* (Toronto, 1944); Douglas McKay, *The honourable Company* (Toronto, 1936), pp. 175-218.

of canals particularly in the northern counties these prevail. It is very flat only little elevations. About Birmingham it is beautiful but quite beholden to trees which make even the red houses look well. I had an exaggerated idea of English houses expecting to see them white whereas they are generally awkwardly formed and as red as brick and tile can make them. The wee orchards are lovely but as for the weans they are as dirty as hands could make them. About Birmingham the roofs are all covered with tiles. Near L.pool the aristocrats of money plaster their houses with mastic so as to represent stone. It is shocking to see *monuments* built of brick like the lum of a steam mill.

I forgot to say that Tom Ogilvy figured at the L.pool fancy ball in the dress of a Russian officer, bright green trousers with a broad bright strip of gold down the outside, and a green cap and vest fringed with ermine. Two friends (Brazilians) vaped one as a smuggler and the other as a Portuguese. M^r Ferguson (Halifax) went with us to Liverpool and we became great friends. I rather think I heard someone say that M^r Smith knew him. If Miss Smith did I am sure she will be diverted to hear that he figured at the ball as Henry the Fifth so you must tell her, it is the last character (I mean Royalty) that I would have expected him to attempt as he is very diffident and bashful. We have all round friendship and expect to meet in his own country. We had a delightful passage in the *Admiral* M^r and Mademoiselle Canar,¹ the American, a mail contractor with a million of money, were there. From Tom and M^r Ferguson being there I was nearly killed with kindness. If I had paper time and pennies I could entertain you with the occurrences on board and my companions on the railway, two of whom sat reading, one the Mercury newspaper and the other a work on the importance of the authenticity of the Old Testament the whole way and scarcely looked out of the window even for a moment. The railway Company have planted with trees every bit of spare ground on the road and keep them all cut at top so as not to intercept the view I dont know how they will like this treatment when they get older but at present they are like nothing human except Miss Marg^t Paterson for breadth.

¹Samuel Cunard and one of his daughters from Halifax, Nova Scotia. Cunard at this time was arranging for the inauguration of the Cunard Line steamship service across the Atlantic.

Hargrave has brought me your letter I am distressed to hear that Polly is still unwell, and will not be happy till I hear again. I am to have a necklace to wear Miss Smith's cross upon. It is as much admired as in Edinburgh. Poor old Duncan, I hope he is not to suffer much I never remembered to take leave of Mary Clark¹ till I said goodbye to John on board the Ad. Did I take leave of all [?] I recollect Polly but not Lockie. Give him and Alex^r my love and tell Mary how sorry I am. M^{rs} McTaggart came down Hargrave standing sentry over me at the cabin door. Whenever she made her appearance he began "Now my good lady" and proceeded to kiss her himself with all his might. She just said goodbye and went, when he brought down D^r Harvey with the intention of enlightening him with his notions of charity and poor laws when the gangway moved and the D^r ran off to the steerage [letter broken off here].

The railroad engines are all tastefully decorated with green branches and ribbons to represent flowers. Near all the stations are plots of flowers and the authorities strut about with huge bunches of lilac and red tulips in their button-holes. I wish Hector saw the omnibus horses, how they are ornamented, how large they are. Next to the Turk I mention I was pleased with the two *bald* horses and the radishes which are large enough to please even old Duncan. There are strawberries but few. When I write Papa and Mama I shall have seen more of the world. The Governor urges me to go down and stay with his wife as soon as we can get ready. M^r Stuart is sitting like patience waiting to begin a harangue. The Governor brought Mr. Macleod² who pays forenoon visits or what ought to be such at 11 o'clock at night with a porter and a lantern. He is an excessive yahoo but not the least *blate*. Will you give our love to Mama and Papa likewise remember us very kindly to the East Cliffe ladies and Miss Smith. Believe me

ever affect. yrs.

L. HARGRAVE

¹Duncan Clarke was the gardener at Kilchrist House. His daughter Mary was the cook.

²Possibly Chief Trader John McLeod on furlough from the Columbia.

6. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

London Tuesday 5th May 1840

My Dear Mama

I meant to have begun a letter to you yesterday but we went out early and were so wearied with driving in omnibi all day that I had to go to my bed as soon as we got dinner. We called for M^{rs} Worsley but she was out. I waited in her lodging for an hour while Hargrave made some calls but the landlady said she would not be back till 9 oclock since she was not home at 3. I am going back today at 11 oclock. While writing I have got a note saying they start for L.pool by this way at 7 tomorrow. I must go today before 2 or between 5 and 6 as they are going to a juvenile ball for Cecilia.

Of all the men who ever aggravated a Christian the Governor is the most weariful. He marched into poor M^r Stuart's room today at 8 oclock and pulled him out of his bed. He never seems to rest night or day. He breakfasted with us and gave a sketch of M^{rs} Finlayson's¹ experiences in the way of servant-hunting. It is consolatory to find that our disappointment and disgust have been nothing. One old woman, after learning how delighted she was at the prospect of going, on getting a hint the other day that she should get ready, said that she had been ashamed to say that in consequence of the entreaties of her friends she had altered her mind. She has got another in the meantime but has failed in all attempts at getting a cook. M^{rs} Simpson² is weakly just now but is to be up to see me tomorrow or next day. The Gov. has sent Hargrave to call for the old Simpsons³ at their house of

¹This was Isobel Graham Simpson (b. 1811), eldest of Geddes McKenzie Simpson's eight daughters, and sister of Mrs. George Simpson. She had been married in 1839 to Duncan Finlayson, but her health was too delicate at that time to allow her to accompany her husband to his new post as governor of Assiniboia at Red River. She was now preparing to go with the Hargraves to York Factory, where her husband would meet her.

²Frances Ramsay Simpson (1812-1853), second daughter of Geddes McKenzie Simpson, who married her cousin, George Simpson, in 1830.

³Geddes McKenzie Simpson (d. 1849) and Frances Simpson. Simpson was a colonial broker of the firm of Simpson, Scott and Company, 73 Great Tower Street, London. The family residence was at this time New Grove House, Mile End Road, near the city of London, and in later years, Stamford Hill.

business as he has not time to intimate his arrival himself.

We went to the parks on Sunday and saw a good deal of splendor, but except in the article of snob and very beautiful children I was disappointed, I saw one of the royal Dowagers in a carriage but whether the Duchess of Kent or the Queen Adelaide I could not learn. *The* Queen did not come out but we had a good view of the Duke of Wellington walking in his garden at Apsley House. The paling is boarded outside with planks and I *keeked* through a chink in a most unsatisfactory manner till I had courage and mounted upon the stones on which the railing is set and so saw over the hedge. I dont think him at all like his engravings. He is very thin, dressed completely in black, his hair white like old Duncan's. He is quite erect to his neck, which pokes sadly forward, not very tall, he reminded us very much of Captain Tom only he looks much more active and walks remarkably fast. After he went in he came and stood for a while at an open window, which opening like a door we saw him completely from head to foot, and he looks much milder and more agreeable than I had ever imagined, from the notion the prints give of him. I have got a mousseline gown.

Tuesday night. I went to see the Worsleys this morning and joined them in the old way. W. had agreed to remain till Friday. She went with us to the Adelphi gallery where we saw and heard everything that is new and extraordinary. Worsley and she had a fight in which he was victor, much to Hargrave's horror as the debate was as to whether he should come to her or she return to their lodgings to take him to make calls. She says she is ill and her nerves unstrung by the climate of Wight. Prince Albert has applied to her nephew Sir Richard Jenkins¹ for his interest in getting a cadet-ship for a poor German cousin of his, so to make it complimentary Sir R. had a general meeting, and it was carried by acclamation, so the Prince wrote a very handsome letter of thanks, M^{rs} W. says. She says that she will not survive her accouchement, or at least that she will never have a living baby. I hope this is nonsense—I think it is—as M^{rs} W. is full of foolish stories. I wish you heard M^r and her on omnibuses—I have ridden about in them and found people of different descriptions

¹Chairman of the Board of Directors, East India Company.

but very civil and most of them evidently ladies and gentlemen. She is keeping Worsley grievously in the dark on the subject of railway tunnels and cautioned me against speaking of any such impediments. I would like to see him when he enters the first tunnel or even when he sits down and sees the lamp burning in the roof of the carriage.

When we came home we found the cards of M^{rs} Finlayson and the old M^r and M^{rs} Simpson. At the Royal Gallery today we saw the torpedo, a hideously ugly fish it is, swimming in a pond. What seemed by far the most attractive to the people was the electric battery. We were in the house upwards of three hours and the whole time there was a continued yelling and laughter from the persons who were electrified. It was beautiful to see the man who operated, he has got a fashion of laughing and the grin never leaves his countenance. We saw Arnote's hydrostatic bed and his stove.

I am wearying to hear how Polly is. Little boys like Alex^f wear blouses made of unbleached cotton or linen, some of them are closed in front but they are generally open. I am sure I would be too much diverted living in London—only here I am back in the court and see nothing but a poor canary which I fear will not [illegible], having made its appearance today, but I shall not be long here as the Governor is to get lodgings for us at Gravesend, and the people wish us to dine with them which is the only time I am at home. As we set out at ten in the morning the great throng at the house has not yet begun.

I am so sorry to say the furs sold miserably cheap this winter so that the dividends are small. Hargrave has given me 100 golden guineas to keep. I never saw such a turnout before, I mean that we are to use them as we require. We have bought carpets, and I have got among other things a very pretty British plate at £14.0. There are magnificent tea-pots beautifully formed and carved at £3 and set to correspond, but Hargrave only wished to have these while he is out of the world, and if we live he says he will get real silver. I am to get 50 guineas for a piano, at least it is not to be less. I wish you saw Worsley with a pair of spectacles shaped so [sketch] they are dark blue and make him look most absurd.

Such extortion, as the stamped covers are so heavy that I

shall not be able to write Papa as I intended along with this. These covers cost $1\frac{1}{4}$ per dozen.¹ I got the unhappy Hargrave to go out and buy $2\frac{1}{8}$ worth as I am always afraid that the waiters dont pay. M^r Stuart is haranguing so that I am stupefied. I forgot to say that Worsley's spectacles are a sort of railing like what people have over their landaus.

Drury Lane is closed just now and there is no getting tickets at the opera. We expect to get them to see *The Merry Wives of Windsor* on Thursday or Saturday, at Covent Garden. M^{rs} Worsley spent yesterday at Kentish Town with Miss Jewitt who informed her that Lady Isabella Erskine of Buchan is to be married to M^r Gordon of Akenhead. They had met at Leamington and know nothing about her ladyship's character which by M^{rs} W.'s account is a remarkable one. The Gordons are all in extasies. Miss Jewitt was governess among them so you will know who I mean.

I sent a letter to the post on Sunday morning and will write again and say how I am likely to flourish with M^{rs} Finlayson. She did not lose an hour in calling for me but I shall not be able to see her tomorrow having promised to spend the forenoon with M^{rs} W. till Worsley was ready to go out about 2 oclock, and then it will be too late as they live out of town.

With love to Papa, Polly, Flo and the boys I remain
ever your most affectionate daughter

LETITIA HARGRAVE

7. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

London Saturday 9th May 1840

My dear Mama—

I have just written a letter to Mrs Loudoun and as I have a few minutes I shall begin one to you. I was much distressed by Flora's account of poor Lockies illness and am very anxious to hear whether Polly & she escape infection— We are going down to Gravesend tomorrow to visit M^{rs} Simpson we are to dine & stay all night with them, but are engaged here both on Monday

¹Stamped covers and adhesive postage stamps for the new penny postage were available for the first time on May 6, 1840.

& Tuesday, so that I will be able to tell you about M^{rs} Simpson. We have visited both M^r Scott (who is married to her sister)¹ & old M^r Simpson— I like them all very much, they were very kind. M^{rs} Finlayson is 31 nearly. She is little & lady like, has a beautiful complexion & is very pretty. Altho' she looks like a girl of 18 it is plain that she has been much better looking— Her brother² is rather better but evidently dying—he is a tremendous height & looks ghastly. They are all delicate. Their mother is a very pretty pleasant looking woman, and it is melancholy to see her, she is like nothing I ever saw but a *clocking* hen, running after her family to make them take care of themselves— M^{rs} Finlayson reminds me of M^{rs} Campbell Skipness— They have all that sort of simplicity & are like her only much prettier & I think more elegant looking— M^{rs} F was muffled up with a tippet as she is ill with a cold—so that I have scarcely got a fair view of her yet— They have a beautiful garden into w^{ch} they took me while mother & daughter enlarged on its loveliness— They presented me with their only china rose & a bunch of lilac, these being all the flowers ready. M^{rs} Scott is a dying little object not the size of a snipe she was sitting in a drawing room by herself with a *London* white wrapper on her & a black shawl, without a cap & nothing could be more comfortless—her husband is a great fat good humoured nice like man & like the rest of them most exceedingly kind— I am sure M^{rs} Finlayson & I will be good friends—

We were down looking at our berths the Capⁿ is a very nice like person not at all bashful about making demands on the Committee for our comfort, having asked sundry additions to his ship's complements on our account in consideration whereof we have invited him & his newly married wife to dine with us on Monday when there is to be another Hudson man besides M^r Stuart who

¹Ann (b. 1818), fourth daughter of Geddes McKenzie Simpson, who married a member of her father's business firm.

²Webster (b. 1816), fourth of Geddes McKenzie Simpson's seven sons.

³David Herd entered the Company's service in 1834. He was chief officer of the *Prince Rupert* until 1839, when he was appointed captain; and he thereafter commanded vessels of the Company for the rest of his career. For an account of the Company's reward for his long years of service see I. Cowie, *The Company of Adventurers* (Toronto, 1930), p. 80; also *Report from the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company* (London, 1857), pp. 255-8.

is going out with us to a dinner party on Tuesday & returns to Scot^d on Wednes^y— I was quite appalled by his recommending me his late wife Mary Taylor¹ at York for a lady's maid & this before Capⁿ Herd who had taken her home. Harg^{ve} had left me in the room & the Capⁿ was enquiring about the necessary comforts for Miss Dunnett² when old Stuart made the proposal with a dismal groan & great praise of the person in question. He went out & I boldly asked M^r Herd if he had meant his wife he said he did. When he gave her into his charge, he said that her health required an immediate return to her own country. He said he

¹Mary Taylor, together with her sister Margaret ("country wife" of Governor George Simpson), and her brothers George (sloopmaster at York in 1827) and Thomas (personal servant to Governor Simpson, 1821-30), were the children of Captain George Taylor ("Suppd. residence England," and recorded in 1821 as "Late Master of a Schooner," H.B.C. Arch. E. 3/1, fo. 232) and his native wife, Jane Prince. He died previous to 1838; and his wife died in 1844 at the age of sixty-four years. Mary Taylor was the "country wife" of Chief Factor John Stuart, who went to Scotland on furlough in 1835, previous to his retirement in 1839, and sent for Mary in 1837. The arrangement, however, was not successful; and he returned her to York in 1839. D. Finlayson to Hargrave, May 31, 1838: "Mary Taylor Stuart . . . returns by the ship. The old Boy has given her £350 and she has cost him £50 or £60 more in equip^g her out for the Country." Nicol Finlayson to Hargrave, June 14, 1838: "I was surprised to find on my arrival in London that Old Aesop had determined on sending Mary back to the country. He pretended that his friends would not associate with her if he married her, but that is false, they did not wish to do so because he would not marry her." Simpson to Hargrave, London, March 20, 1839: "This will be handed you by Mary Taylor. Should she wish to go to Red River have the goodness to fit her out comfortably with an old Tent, Provisions &c. and put her under such protection as will guard her against insult. The poor girl has been sadly disappointed and the trifling pecuniary compensation that has been made to her is no cure to her wounded feelings. If in order to save her little means she should desire to pass the winter at York, I think you might so manage it, as to place her with Rendall or Gladman or some one of the other Family gentlemen where she could live comfortably free of expense. I feel interested in this poor girl and recommend her strongly to your kind attention." After she left York Mary lived for a year in Nicol Finlayson's family. In 1841 he reported her as "with her relations near the Stone Fort" (Finlayson to Hargrave, June 20, 1841); and in 1842, "Mary Taylor lives with her brother at his house" (same to same, June 2, 1842). She later married John Smith, whose property was near that of her brother George. This property is now the country home of Mr. H. B. Lyall, member of the Canadian Committee, Hudson's Bay Company.

²Margaret Dunnet, who had been engaged as maid to Letitia. See introduction, p. xxxi.

had thought it prudent to give her in charge to the steward as she had calumniated his predecessor who brought her here & he had to retire from the service. So her 1st exploit on reaching York, was to complain to Hargrave of Herd's inattention, but on enquiry it was found he had only been a little reserved. I did not tell Hargrave of this conversation as he upholds Miss Taylor & is likewise very fond of Herd, but what he says of her telling fibs has confirmed me in my resolution to live 20 years in her *vicinity* & resist if any attempts are made to make us acquainted— She is now in the family of Nichol Finlayson¹ Herd declares that Stuart had to send her away as she was not presentable from ignorance & his genteel friends were getting cool upon him— But she had persuaded Hargrave that she would not live here without a legal marriage. I will hear all from M^{rs} Simpson who is horridly sick of Stuart just now—he having gone down to Gravesend to be near her & only returned to give us the benefit of his society— Hargrave & he fight incessantly but I am a great friend.

Hargrave & I went to Covent Garⁿ theatre on Thursday the tickets were 7/6 each besides coach hire & donation to women for keeping bonnets &c— The play was the Merry wives of Windsor. I was very wearied of it when the princes Albert & Ernest came in much to my delight. They are uncommonly pleasing gentleman like men. Albert's pictures are not quite like him, he looks rather diffident. His brother came forward & sat, but his Roy^l High^s only ventured to do so when anything remarkable took place. They appeared to understand English perfectly especially Ernest who seemed to enjoy it extremely. The afterpiece was the Sleeping beauty, wherein was represented the christening of a royal baby, most ridiculously caricatured—I dont mean that we saw the actual baptism but we heard the guns & other pageantry & it was altogether such as to make the poor Prince look very uncomfortable with the remarks of the Courtiers. Ernest was very merry upon it but his brother looked suddenly very obtuse & E- seemed to be interpreting. There was

¹Nicol Finlayson, brother of Duncan, was in charge at York in Hargrave's absence. See introduction, p. xxvi. For biography see R. H. Fleming (ed.), *Minutes of Council* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1941), pp. 438-40. The family home was at Munloch, Scotland.

one gentⁿ in attendance upon them. I must tell y^u of the baby. I was sure it was a doll but it turned out a genuine wean— It had been taught in the rehearsal & the poor infant behaved like a lamb only it would not keep its head properly & cocked up to admire the chandeliers. It seemed quite amazed & during upwards of $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour it never cried nor looked from the lights till the part arrived where it had to kiss the whole court & it seemed anxious to get thro with the ceremony— Madame Vestris looked beautiful & so did M^{rs} Nesbitt but she is not $\frac{1}{2}$ so elegant in her appearance—

I have got on with my letter. Will you be so good as send me a recipe for making curry as I have got none & M^{rs} Tag.¹ used to say she had an excellent one— I will answer Flora's letter next time & hope to hear that she & Polly are well. I hope it will be satisfactory to hear that M^r Finlayson² had reported favorably of us to his wife & her family. I shall send away this letter & tell you in my next how we get on at Gravesend— Hargrave joins me in kindest love to you papa Polly Flo & the boys & I ever am
m^o affec^{ly} yrs

L. HARGRAVE

M^{rs} W- had a letter from Dugald—at the time y^u got y^{rs}

L H-

My throat is better & worse just as it happens— I am quite well in other respects.

8. TO DUGALD MACTAVISH SENIOR

London 9th May 1840

My Dear Papa

I am in hopes every day that we shall have a letter telling us that you are coming here. We drank tea with the Worsleys on Wednesday evening and M^r W. presented me with $\frac{1}{2}$ a dozen d'oyleys of his own manufacture. The people here have made up their minds at last that Ld. Wm. Russell was murdered by his own

¹Mrs. McTaggart, a family friend at Kilchrist House.

²Duncan Finlayson. For contacts with the Hargraves see introduction. For biography see E. E. Rich (ed.), *Simpson's Athabasca journal* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1938), pp. 437-8. On his retirement, Finlayson was on November 21, 1859 elected a member of the London Committee of the Company. He died in 1862.

valet.¹ The Hudson's Bay people are making themselves very busy just now in supporting Sir Augustus D'Este² in his claims, the Gov. in particular, they say that Pr. Geo. of Cumberland cant succeed on account of his blindness. I agree with Hargrave that his cause whether right or wrong must be in a bad way [word torn] to get support from people so far out of his rank. Old M^r Stuart is very intimate with him and he [sees] all the letters he gets from his father—and if the Gov. and M^{rs} S. are believed they are curious productions. M^r Haldane³ came in here just as we were sitting down to dinner at 8 oclock on Thursday. M^r Stuart was going to dine with Sir L. Grant and we were hurrying to get away to the theatre but we asked him to stay and go with us. It turned out that Stuart had asked him to dinner but in the meantime formed an engagement himself. Haldane did not seem well pleased but he set off on Stuart's invitation to Sir Lewis's party where he entertained them with an account of the great people he visits in London and elsewhere.

I have just written M^{rs} Loudoun and M^{rs} Hamilton from whom I had a letter since we came here. We saw our ship yesterday and it seems very comfortable. Margaret Dunnett writes that she will leave Edinburgh on the 20th. I forgot to tell Mama that I have a white silk bonnet the same kind as M^{rs} MacEachern's only a quarter of its size. I am now getting a large cloak and my otter skin made into a bonnet—or rather cap. Mama's skin was not delivered to us at Greenock so that I presume M^r Buchanan still has it. I rather think we will be going to Gravesend about the end of next week as they are anxious that we should go down as soon as possible. We will look at lodgings of which the Gov. spoke on Monday. Hargrave joins me in love to you and all at home. Believe me ever my dear Papa

Your most affectionate daughter

L H

¹F. B. Courvoisier, Lord William Russell's valet, was convicted of the murder of his master on June 18, 1840.

²Sir Augustus Frederick d'Este (1794-1848) was the son of the Duke of Sussex, youngest son of George III. When Sussex died in 1843, d'Este preferred to the House of Lords his claim to succeed to his titles and estates, which claim he was now, in 1840, preparing. His claim was not established.

³Chief Factor John Haldane had retired in 1827. For biography see E. E. Rich (ed.), *Colin Robertson's correspondence-book* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1939), pp. 215-16.

9. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

Gravesend 4 Clifton Terrace
Thursday 14th—15th May 1840

My dear Mama

We arrived here at two yesterday afternoon, and as far as I am concerned we are very comfortable but Hargrave misses the bustle & hubbub of London & after waiting here till 12 this morn^g fairly set off for town. I hope he may be benefited by the sail as he will be so by nothing else at so late an hour. I find I was wrong when I said the fare was more on Sunday than on week days. It being always 2/ down & only sixpence up to London. For some days before I left London I was very unwell with horrid sickness nausea & headache. Hargrave declared it was going out to dinner but I think it must have been the fatigue of walking & omnibus driving & perhaps the dullness of the G^e & Vu^{re}. I began to get better yesterday & today am nearly well, but thinner than when I left home— Old M^{rs} Simpson is down with her daughter just now—they are very kind— I dont think I told y^u that we had been at a dinner party at our Cap^{ns} house. He is newly married & lives with his mother in law, a M^{rs} Livingston whose husband had a Liverpool packet & brought Uncle John¹ home long ago. I never in my life saw such an entertainment. Old Stuart was there & a son in law of the old lady's Capⁿ Pollock who commands an East Indiaman & on whose ship Sir Henry Lane died. His wife seems about 17 & has been married 2 years. M^{rs} Herd is very young. M^{rs} P- dressed in black her sister in lilac satin. They live in Arbor square & denounced the city pretty strongly. Y^u may conjecture what sort of a self contained house it is when the stairs w^d not admit of M^r Herd & me going down together. The mats under the dishes were all sewed worsted very beautiful & my bag is full at this minute of fruit that I c^d not possibly swallow at the desert. I was so ill that the look of a great white faced white headed man with his hair divided down

¹John George McTavish was a younger brother of Letitia's father, Sheriff Dugald Mactavish. For family background see introduction, p. xx-xxi. For biography see W. S. Wallace (ed.), *Documents relating to the North West Company* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1935), p. 485, and Rich, *Simpson's Athabasca journal*, pp. 456-7. McTavish followed his patron, Simon McTavish, in the spelling of his name.

the middle called D^r Dobie made me sick before I saw remarkably fat lamb & every thing else that c^d be put on a table. The pressing that I endured was dreadful. They had dishes of preserved ginger as full as if they had been potatoes. It was the only place we have seen cream in London & wherever they got it it was beautiful. M^r Webster¹ called for & took me out in his carriage. M^{rs} W. is a great fat woman 34 years younger than her husband. They are great friends of the Simpsons & are living here for his health w^{ch} is very bad. I have also had a walk with old M^{rs} Simpson. I thought all along that the Gov^{rs} wife had a melancholy look & the old lady fairly let out that the said gov^r is very fashious. It began by her speaking of her love for gardening & how she wished she had a little more money to beautify her little shrubbery, that for 34 years she had got all her husband had to give & he never w^d look at a single account of her outlay nor ever been other than satisfied with her endeavors to economize, whilst Frances dared not miss sixpence or there was a rumpus, she must not attempt to advise in any one way nor speak in support of what he does not see fit to do or hear. I observed all this but thought it was simplicity. For one thing she sat with the tea tray on Sunday even^g, she asked if she sh^d ring & have it taken away. Altho' he was done he said nothing & there it remained for long & two or 3 other matters of the same kind. If she speaks at all in opposition to him he bids her hold her tongue, as she knows nothing about it— Her mother said she told her that if she w^d exert herself & have a little mind of her own the Gov^r w^d be a better husband & she a much more useful wife. But she says she wont as she w^d rather submit than run the risk of an argument. I dont mean that he is bad or cross to her, but he treats her & the little girl² exactly alike. She says it is the arbitrary habits he

¹James Webster was an intimate friend of the Geddes McKenzie Simpson family, after whom Webster Simpson, and George Simpson's oldest daughter, Frances Webster, were named. In letter 25 Letitia says he was the rightful "Viscount or Earl Dundee." He had a country home at West Ham, Essex.

²Frances Webster, born in London in January, 1834, was the second, and at this time the only child of George and Frances Simpson. She married Angus Cameron, first cashier and second president of the Bank of Toronto, who died in 1861. Three of their children died in infancy. Frances Simpson Cameron later married a Mr. Hodder. She died in France in the eighteen-eighties, leaving her only surviving child, Elizabeth Cameron, to Angus Cameron's sister in Scotland. This child died, unmarried, while on a visit to Toronto in 1888.

acquired in the North. M^{rs} George told Hargrave (but it was strictly confidential & must not be known) that he contemplates leaving Britain next Spring crossing the Rocky mountains, passing up to the Russian settlement & so home by Siberia making the circuit of the globe. M^r H did not think her very wrong for telling her husbands secret plans, so I suppose there is not more harm in my telling y^u tho' it is not very safe as his business is of a nature requiring secresy. His eyes dont look bad but when he signs his name he has to turn them away from the paper—

There is nothing but the road between this house & the river so that we see the names on the steamers w^{ch} pass & the number is extraordinary, ships of all sizes going & coming. They have a steamboat which has no paddles, but is managed by what they call the Archimedean screw, the boat looks very beautiful as it is not disfigured by the ugly boxes, but looks exactly like a sailing vessel. It has a funnel of course but you w^d wonder how little it affects its appearance. I had imagined nothing like the Dreadnought for size, it is tremendous. The Hulks are shocking looking places— I admire Greenwich hospital more than any thing I have seen in the way of building. It is much more like a palace than Buckingham or any other of the royal houses about London. Indeed it is like 4 palaces as there are 4 separate buildings. Apsley House seems nothing great.

15th This is a bad morn^g & for want of other employment Hargrave has gone off for more tonic draughts. I am much better today than I was even yesterday. We had a long walk with the Simpsons last [night] & heard the nightingales singing in all directions. The whole soil about this is brick clay & there are immense fields of bricks ready made piled up in solid piles. It is customary to make bricks of the clay dug out for the foundation of the houses & they say it makes quite enough for that purpose. Below the surface is chalk & the country is white with quarries w^{ch} are dug. It is sent off in small vessels & there are clumsy rail roads & queer looking carts constantly at work running to & fro—between them & the quays—I have looked in at windows & seen people breakfasting upon bread cheese & ale, I mean laboring men. There are many annuals in flower & lettuces beginning to shoot—M^{rs} Worsley got £50 from Miss Spottiswood & £20 from Andrew while she was here. She gave half of Miss's

donation to W- & said nothing of what she kept as she was in need of things for Cecilia & herself. She presented Andrew's present to M^{rs} Frances to buy a piano & never told Worsley a word about it. I think she was a great fool, as a piano is the last present that one poor woman need make another— She gave me a very gay penwiper ornamented with beads & I am sure she spent several pounds on various things of the same kind to take to her friends in Scotland— She is to send Chambers journal to Willie—

M^r Hargrave was too late of getting up to town to enable him to call as he had intended upon M^r Lee with M^r Loudouns letter which he w^d not deliver while we were in town, in case of their asking him to dinner & keeping us in London after the time he had fixed for leaving it. He is going to get wine from Lee & champagne for the voyage. Our berth¹ is a wonderfully broad one as berths in the Prince Rupert go— Mine being undermost, I must lie on the floor, wth a sort of ledge to keep me from rolling about. Hargrave will have severe scrambling as his is very high up leaving me a very lofty one, in the roof. The rest are small, & our unhappy damsel will be sorely pitched about as hers is nearest the end of the ship. The whole ship is beautifully clean & we are to have new beds &c. The Capⁿ seems extremely anxious that we sh^d be comfortable & even more he has secured a goat about to kid for milk for tea & is laying in quantities of delicacies, not forgetting the everlasting figs and ginger that distressed me so much & w^{ch} I am sure will not be appreciated as they deserve, at least by me as I never liked them & here & on ship board where there is neither water nor milk to quench the thirst they produce, I will avoid them still more.

I have got a g^t cloth cloke wadded & lined with *scarlet* flannel no cape but a hood made to look like a collar. My fur cap is likewise made in the form of a turban— They have not come down yet. I am getting my straw bonnet turned, but if it is neat I will get a black & white one for the voyage, as it will be completely spoiled—

¹Simpson to Hargrave, March 20, 1840: "I was on board the Prince Rupert yesterday . . . determining the berths. Mrs. Finlayson & her maid will occupy the Captain's State Room, Jean Ross and the Governess the adjoining Berth, you & Mrs. Hargrave the largest Berth on the Larboard side, and your maid the adjoining Berth, you being the only gentleman in the After Cabin."

Miss Allen¹ the Red River governess who is going out is middle aged, & superior to those who have preceded her. The last was to return here, so the Gov^r when last out observed that the squaw of a retired Chief factor² looked very like death advised her husband to marry the said teacher when he lost his wife. A good deal to his surprize the last express brought tidings that she was fairly settled in the Colony having been married to the very gentleman as soon after the old lady's death as she could get ready & which was six weeks. M^r Simpson is well pleased but it was disinterested in the factor as he has nothing now to do with the Gov^r—

I was to have gone out today with M^r Webster to the Zoological gardens but the day is so bad that it is impossible. This place is larger I think than Campⁿ. It has about 6,000 inhabitants, but the houses are larger. I dont know whether the Census includes the lodgers, but I w^d think not as there are such numbers of them—I expect to hear from home tomorrow—& hope that Polly has got well & that no one has taken fever since Lockhart— Provisions here are dearer than in London. Beef (the best kind) is 1/ a lb. butter 1/9 bread 9^d a loaf, while in London beef is 8^d or 9^d & the quatern loaf 8^d. I dont know the difference in other things, but if M^r Stuart may be believed, lodgings are dearer too, as he asserts that a friend of his gets 2 apartments & his breakfast at the West end for twenty five shillings a week.

Hargrave came home with my “draughts” & Coopers last novel, & is now snoring loudly on the sofa, it being $\frac{1}{2}$ past 11 A M. I dont expect that he will live here— My throat is keeping pretty well, that is to say it is much as it was & sometimes I dont feel it at all— It is however frequently in rather an angry state. I was to have written papa today but have nothing more to say. I left a letter with the people at the George & Vulture to be sent to Flora w^{ch} I daresay has reached you by this time. The vessels are

¹Miss Allan had been engaged by Governor Simpson as teacher for the girls at the Red River Academy. The school was under the auspices of the Anglican Church, and John Macallan had been its head and teacher of the boys since 1833. Three of Miss Allan's predecessors had married chief factors not long after their arrival in Red River.

²The reference is probably to the marriage of Robert Logan (1775-1866) to Mrs. Ingham in 1839. See G. de T. Glazebrook (ed.), *Hargrave correspondence, 1821-43* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1938), p. 305.

to sail wind permitting on the 1st Sunday in June at least so I understand, but whether from London or Gravesend I cannot say, & they always remain here for a good while. There is a very great affair of a dinner given to all concerned at the Clifton hotel, before the ships leave— Will you give my love to papa Polly Flora & the boys and believe me my dear Mama

Yours most affectionately

LETITIA HARGRAVE

There are some children lodging up stairs the nicest boys I ever saw. One of them anonced to me that his mama came down here for a continual pain & the spasms were very bad this morn^g

10. TO FLORA MACTAVISH

[Gravesend] May 15 1840

My dear Flora

The reason for my writing so very soon after I sent away Mama's letter is that I find I was rash in committing to paper what I said of the family affairs of a person of whom I spoke yesterday. I have been desired by M^r H. never to let such a thing escape me as the hopes of all connected with us would be knocked to the ground were it ever suspected that such a subject had ever been mooted. I did not say that I had done so and I am sure that there is no danger of its ever transpiring from anything I have said or you heard of the matter. I wish I were back to London for I have nothing to write about here although I like this place better and can go up when I feel inclined. As old M^{rs} Simpson is down I do not like to go much there but she is to be here immediately to take leave as she is going home today. The Gov. has got a bad cold just now and has always a sore throat, he says. I suppose you have not seen Miss Fleming yet. Tell me what the Barrs are doing. I have not time to finish even this little bit of paper.

Your very aff.

L H

11. TO MARY MACTAVISH

4 Clifton Terrace, Gravesend, 17th May 1840

My Dear Polly,

Papa mentioned that you would write on Monday so that I

suppose Mr. Hargrave will bring down a letter this evening, but as I have leisure this m^{ng} I think I may as well write Flora and you, though there is little to say as this place is only remarkable for quiet and shrimps. It is so cold that I have had recourse to fires which die out in spite of my heart every hour. [part of letter missing]

I was very uneasy though I did not say any thing about my illness. Every spare moment I had I sat & slept but never went to my bed & was always up at 8 in the morn^g. We have got a complete break in the weather. The river is stormy & boisterous & very dirty looking. There are baths close to us very gay as far as architecture goes—but they say extremely muddy & only better than the river itself in as much as dead cats & dogs are excluded by some sort of draw bridge. They call them salt water but I dont suppose that ever was, or ever will be attested as I can imagine no one with courage to taste. The river is about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile broad at this place. The opposite coast is Essex w^{ch} is quite flat very green with plenty of trees w^{ch} are not planted in clumps like ours but in hedgerows so that they take up little ground & I daresay look better. I have never seen a turf or stone dyke since I left Scot^d all hedges & square fields. Along some parts of the high road here there are walls built of flint stone & all the roads are made of flint. I can assure you when I ride out with M^r Webster 8 souls in a one horse carriage w^{ch} I daresay is none of the strongest, I always hope if we do capsizes that it may be clean into the ditch as no one c^d avoid a fractured skull upon them they are so sharp. Have you heard any thing of Charlotte, Flora has not mentioned her at all.

M^r Stuart took leave of the people at the Vulture & has not since been heard of except that he did not go by the steamer to Leith. I never saw such a wearisome horror & am terrified that he will be down here before he goes—altho I dont think he patronized me so much having taken up with a lodging house woman whose little girls he used to escort about town from morn^g till night. His nephew had lived there & he took them by the hand in consequence of their kindness to him.

I am wearying till we get fairly away for nothing can be more tiresome than waiting with the river before me morn^g noon & night. I feel actually cast down thinking of my being in this

state for 3 weeks yet, not but what every thing is comfortable but I am unsettled. The Thames is not the least like Clyde, it winds about like a burn & ships splash about in every part of it without fear of rocks or beds of sand. If you have not written before this reaches you be sure to tell me particularly how Lockie is and if Alex^r has got perfectly well & able to go to school.

Yours affec^{ty}

L H

12. TO DUGALD MACTAVISH, SENIOR

Gravesend Thursday 21st May 1840

My dear papa

I received Polly & Floras letters on Saturday & you will have got one from this ere now—and one from Hargrave concerning Hector which I hope will be satisfactory to you— They are all so wrapt up in mystery here that I am afraid to speak of any thing I hear about the company—but I cant help mentioning that the Gov^r says—Dugalds old foe, M^r Gladman¹ now accountant at York is very troublesome & he said he had thoughts of bringing Dugald there & sending him elsewhere. M^r H— says it is a very heavy charge as he will have the accounts of a thousand men to keep— M^r Simpson likewise said that he would wish to send Willie over to the Columbia to put their stores in order & of course he would be kept there, but Hargrave combated this with all his

¹George Gladman (1800-1863) entered the Hudson's Bay Company in 1815 as a clerk at East Main, under his father, George Gladman, who had charge there from 1817 until his death in 1821. He served in the Southern Department until 1834, and was for a year at Cumberland House in 1835-6. He was made a chief trader in 1836, and was attached to York as general accountant of the Company. He continued as such, living for part of the time at Oxford House, until he went on furlough in 1845 prior to his retirement in 1846. He re-engaged with the Company in 1850 and served at Tadoussac until 1852, when he again retired, and made his home at Port Hope, Ontario. He was engaged by the government of the province of Canada as chief of the Dawson and Hind expedition in 1857 to survey an overland route to Western Canada, and initiated the work as far as Red River. See *Report from the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company*, pp. 390-4.

might, as they have kept one of his stores¹ men here, & he has no one to put in their places at all competent to the duties— At any rate there will be no change made for one year— The Gov^r has been complaining ever since we came down & has been obliged to make up his mind to remain in town till after the ships sail. M^{rs} S— seems to feel leaving me here after urging us to come, but M^r & M^{rs} Webster are at the hotel quite at hand & I am not the least afraid of dullness— The Simpsons went up yesterday to see her sister M^{rs} Scott & are to return to morrow & take up their luggage & little girl— We are to dine with the Websters to day— The weather is so stormy that they cant go on with their drives. I was very much hurried in writing to Flora on Saturday but I was going out & there was no post on Sunday— My throat has been well ever since we came here—

M^r Hargrave called for M^r Lee the last day he was up. He pressed him to fix a day for us to dine with him—and mentioned that they were to leave town on Friday but Hargrave would not. He got some wine for the voyage— Some of his own friends have prevailed upon him & we are going to a M^r Hamiltons a relation of the Lauries in Glas^w— I have not been up since we came here— & like this place very well altho' I am sure it would be a wearisome place to stay always in— I shall write Polly by Monday's post— There is nothing to be seen here but ships sailing in crowds— Our servant is to leave Edin^h on the 29th. We could not get lodgings for her in any house with our selves—& if she is here too soon will have to sleep on a sofa bed in the sitting room— I have begun to fear that you will not come it is so long past the time— There is a soninlaw² of the landlady's of the G^e & Vulture who being a German I made Har^e ask about pianos, he wrote to Ham-burgh to a musical friend & has been answered that a 1st rate square piano, seasoned for any extremes of climate will cost when well packed with a tuning key &c. £36. We will have no tax, & have ordered it, as the person is very respectable & his corre-

¹John Rendall, from the Orkneys, entered the Company's service in 1820, and served for a number of years at York Factory. He was post master there in 1835. He went with Hargrave by the *Prince Rupert* to London in 1839, where he became superintendent of the Company's fur warehouse. He retired in 1869, and was succeeded by his son, who in turn was succeeded in 1911 by his son. See the *Beaver*, October, 1922, p. 2.

²John F. Klein.

spondent extremely musical. I think there is no danger—I did all I c^d to hinder Hargrave from taking one but he insisted & was going to have paid £50 here as we c^d get no really good one under it, & even these were not remarkable. They are seasoned for extremes in Germany, here they are not—

Hargrave joins me in kindest love to Mama & yrself—with all the rest & I am ever

y^{rs} mo aff^y

L H

I cannot get hold of any newspapers as I had hoped to be able to send you some.

13. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

Gravesend Thursday 21st May [1840]

My dear Mama

M^r Simpson finding himself quite unfit for getting up at 5 every morn^g has fairly given over the attempt & has informed his wife that she is to return to London to morrow. His business was not even over so as to allow him to come down at 5 o'clock, & we are to be here alone, or at least with the Websters living near us till the ships sail— We are going up to a few dinner parties that will not take a refusal & will probably be a few days in town. The Simpsons are going to the George & Vulture for a few days. M^{rs} S. thinks of it exactly as we do, but I suppose she cant help herself— As for provisions the only good thing I saw in the house was soup, as the others were badly cooked. M^{rs} Finlayson is very unwell, & very unwilling to go but she is apparently determined. Her brother was better till the present break in the weather.

My cloke has come down. It is lined with a fine sort of scarlet worsted cloth, has both a hood & cape & looks well. Flora bid me say what shape bonnets generally are. I cant exactly describe them further than that they are *very* small, low at the cheek & in the crown, with frills behind, & not a finger length between the top of the crown & the frill, they are so low. I think a sort of open cottage is the most prevailing shape, at any rate there are no cocking ones to be seen. Silk bonnets are trimmed with the same as the bonnets are made of, a good many twistings that I am sure c^d not be done in Campⁿ.

The people down here all wear straw bonnets some trimmed with the ribbons crossing in front & a very small beau on the top of where they meet, others with about 3 narrow stripes of doubled silk or two penny satin ribbon put round the crown & joining behind with a beau of broad silk or small rosette of narrow satin to cover the joining. The trimming is high in front & low behind with a frill to the bonnet— Flora's black cloke is quite the fashion. I have got my ring made. It is beautifully set & looks very large & handsome. Every one who has seen comments upon it. It is not in the ordinary form of a hoop, but is rather a diamond shape.

The lodgings here I find are about 31/ a week, as we have to pay 2/6 for linen & plate 3^d a day for shoe brushing & for fire as it is so cold that we cant sit without a fire at least there have only been 2 or 3 days we could have done so. The 2 women & the daughter of M^{rs} Sutherland are the landladies—one sister acts as servant, the daughter is a little girl, & they all seem most respectable— They cook very well the little we need & are very correct altogether—

I have been expecting to hear from M^{rs} Worsley but she has never written. M^r Stuart quarreled with the bar maid, the day we left town paid his bill & went no one knows where as people say he w^d not go back to Aberdeen without taking leave of the Governor who has neither seen nor heard of him for ten days past, we suppose he must have gone into lodgings in town, as he had a family in the lodging department whom he patronized at a great rate. I wish you heard M^{rs} [George] Simpsons account of M^{rs} Jⁿ [George] Mactavish's introduction to her eldest daughter a girl of 13.¹ As soon as they arrived at Montreal Uncle had told her. M^{rs} S. says she had evidently suffered, but said nothing till one day after dinner at Lachine with all the gentlemen sitting & M^{rs}

¹This introduction to Mary McTavish took place in the spring of 1830. She was the eldest of four daughters born to John George McTavish and Nancy McKenzie, niece of Chief Factor Donald McKenzie, governor of Assiniboia in 1825-33. Governor Simpson and McTavish had just arrived at Lachine from London with their new wives, Frances Ramsay Simpson and Catherine Turner McTavish. On reaching Red River, Simpson soon arranged marriages there for their former "wives of the country." Nancy McKenzie McTavish became the wife of Pierre LeBlanc on February 7, 1831. (See Fleming, *Minutes of Council*, p. 445).

Simpson & herself the only ladies. M^r Tom Taylor¹ (brother to the late M^{rs} Mary Stuart) who was then the Gov^{rs} serv^t threw open the door with a flourish & announced "Miss Mactavish". Uncle rose & took her up to his wife, who got stupid but shook hands with the Miss who was very pretty & mighty impudent. Her father then proceeded to caress & make of her. M^{rs} M. got white & red & at last rose & left the room, all the party looking very uncomfortable except Uncle & the girl. M^{rs} S. followed & found her in a violent fit of crying, she said she knew the child was to have been home that night but thought she w^d have been spared such a public introduction. All the way up to Moose Uncle spoiled & indulged her in a provoking way & she was often very impertinent to her step mother, who however never took notice of it & always when writing told M^{rs} S. that Mary was a very affect^{te} girl & she had become very much attached to her— She is now well married to a M^r Ross. When they parted at Moose M^{rs} M. had no idea that she was to have at least other 2, of a different family, but they arrived soon after herself one of them called Flora. Uncle has certainly 6 daughters. M^{rs} S. met a child at Red river & was sure it was one. She did not like to enquire till she met her & asked her name. Marg^t Mactavish was the answer & she had a sister Anne— Their mother was the York squaw who was brought, during a severe illness M^{rs} S. had, to give her eldest baby² a drink. She says she was a complete savage, with a coarse blue sort of woolen gown without shape &

¹For parentage see p. 20 n. 1. Thomas Taylor was born about 1797 and entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1815 as a labouring apprentice. From 1821-30 he acted as servant and interpreter to Governor Simpson. He accompanied him on his journey to the Columbia in 1825. Simpson spoke of him as "a Jack of all Trades and altogether a very useful man." From 1830 to 1855 Taylor served as a post master in charge of various posts in the Winnipeg, Lac la Pluie, and Lake Superior Districts, and in the Montreal Department. (See Glazebrook, *Hargrave correspondence*, pp. 50 and 187). He married Mary, half-blood daughter of Chief Factor James Keith, on August 17, 1831, at the Red River Settlement (H.B.C. Arch. E. 4/1, fo. 35). He is cited in her father's will in 1850 as a clerk in the Hudson's Bay Company. He retired in 1855.

²It was evidently after Nancy McTavish and Pierre LeBlanc's first child was born, in November, 1831, that she was wet nurse to the Simpson baby, George Geddes Simpson, who was born at Red River on September 2, 1831. He died on April 22, 1832.

a blanket fastened round her neck. It was she who lost all her family & her husband when the Gov^{rs} son in law upset the canoe.¹ M^{rs} Simpson asked Hargrave the particulars of that story while her husband was present. He looked very melancholy— She evidently has no idea that she has more encumbrances than M^{rs} Mactavish altho' she did say that she was always terrified to look about her in case of seeing something disagreeable.

The accountant² says the dividend this year will not amount to £ 300. They all take this coolly & say it was owing to the mildness of the season that the furs did not sell.

With love to all I am ever y^r m^o affe^c daughter

L HARGRAVE

14. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

[Gravesend] 22 May 1840

My dear Mama

... We had a most beautiful drive with the Websters, they have the most elegant lanes in England, the roads just as good as the high ones. I saw hop-fields for the first time and an old English hall with its park, trees, &c. The hops look very like scarlet runners, each plant supported by its pole.

¹LeBlanc, his wife Nancy, and their children, were on their way to the Columbia District in 1838 when their boat was overturned in a dangerous place by a frightened passenger named Wallace. Wallace had recently married Maria, daughter of Governor Simpson and Betsy Sinclair Miles, and this young couple, together with LeBlanc and his children, were among those who were drowned. For an account of the disaster see E. E. Rich (ed.), *McLoughlin's Fort Vancouver letters, first series 1825-38* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1941), pp. 293-94, and J. A. Stevenson, "Disaster in the Dalles" (*The Beaver*, September, 1942, pp. 19-21). Nancy LeBlanc died, presumably at Fort Vancouver, some time prior to April, 1852. Her daughter Margaret McTavish (Mrs Courtenay Walker), of the same place, received her share of the estate in September, 1852. Sir George Simpson was the executor of Nancy LeBlanc's will. (From John Ballenden's letter-book, 1850-54, consulted through the kindness of Mr. A. M. Bannatyne).

²Edward Roberts, accountant of the Company at Hudson's Bay House, Fenchurch Street, London. See Rich, *McLoughlin letters, second series*, pp. 401-2. "Roberts worked up two flights of stairs at H.B. House, and very often never saw the gentlemen of the Service on their visits home—men whose adventurous lives he envied—but he wrote 'such joys are not for me'." (Note by Lady Grierson).

There are fields of 3 or 4 acres planted with them for barm, there is not a weed to be seen among them. M^r and M^{rs} Webster are very kind. M^r W. was considered dying when he came down, but he is now better and able to eat, as for drinking he took a great tumbler of cold punch during dinner and a pint of brandy after it in 2 tumblers of cold toddy. Another pint was brought up while we were at tea and I suppose he would drink it too, as we left him with it before him. This is his usual performance, he never tastes wine. M^{rs} Webster says the Governor is in a very precarious state of health, and that the violent medicine given him for his eyes is doing his constitution harm and his sight no good. She thinks the defect is caused by a determination of blood to the head from which he suffers more than he would own.

I did not tell you that pease are 25/- a quart in London, but there will be abundance in 3 weeks. Little girls wear black silk spencers and white or colored frocks which look very neat. There are great numbers of gypsies here and they way lay people to tell them their fortune. We came thro' Monmouth St. once and such a set of Jews—they all attacked Hargrave one after the other to buy or sell clothes, I never saw such grandeur as the lady's dresses exhibited, flying out of high windows covered with spangles and really handsome, the whole street is clad with vestures of every description, and even in the George yard there was a constant cry of clo', clo', from daylight to nightfall. I miss the busses down here very much, tho' M^r Webster takes an open carriage on a fine day and a close one on a cold, there is no fun in either compared to the buses, up to the knees in straw and making the most deafening noise, the lads dressed to death with nosegays in their button-holes and gold bands round their hats. I dont think the drivers ever leave their seats, their legs are so stout, and they are many of them like M^r Pickwick. Poor Boz is said to be subject to fits of derangement but I cant hear that he is or ever has been actually in confinement. People seem to think that Master Humphry's Clock is not by Dickens but it must be by the author of Nickleby as it was spoken of in it.

I saw the framework of the House of Parliament, they are to intrude a long way into the river. I'm afraid I dont care much about paintings as I always rushed to the portraits and could not be troubled with the small historical affairs. I liked them when

they were as large as life but was sick of the insignificant ones. I have seen some disgustingly ugly pigs here and no decent ones since we came to England. The bacon is good however.

With love to Papa, Flora and the boys, I am &c.

L H

15. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

George & Vulture Tuesday 26th May 1840

My dear Mama

We arrived here once more at 9 o'clock yesterday breakfasted with M^r Christie¹ & then he took me to the hotel & I stayed with M^{rs} Simpson till past 4. The 1st sight of any moment we saw after landing was a monstrous salmon in a fishmongers window. There were other beautiful fish but this seemed so extraordinary that I stood to look at it & was rewarded by spying a card upon it with "Dedicated to her most gracious Majesty Queen Victoria on her birthday". The thickness was tremendous. Under my window here a mob of gentlemen collected round a car[t] in w^{ch} were 16 turtles. They were all sitting with their heads up & some of them were most excessively heavy. There is a sort of market for them in this court & a porter could never carry more than 2 at a time. They were lively & beautiful animals & turned or rather nodded their heads like so many China mandarins. Some of them looked like large Muses with their yellow bellies—

After a good deal of deliberation I have resolved to tell you what may cause you a little anxiety on my account. My throat feels quite well but for a fortnight yesterday when I was very

¹Alexander Christie, senior, and James Hargrave had travelled together to London in 1839, both going on furlough. They were deputed by the officers of the Northern Department to select a piece of plate to be presented to Governor Simpson. (See introduction, p. xxxi.). Alexander Christie was born in 1792 and joined the Hudson's Bay Company in 1810. He became a chief factor in 1821, and a councillor to the Governors of the Company's Territories in 1822. He served in the Southern Department from 1810 to 1829, and came from Moose Factory to York Factory in 1830, where he remained until 1833. He was in charge at Fort Garry and was governor of Assiniboia from 1833 to 1839. He was at Moose Factory in 1841-4, and again at Red River in 1844-8. He retired in 1848 and in 1849 went to Scotland where he died on December 9, 1872.

ill at the Simpson's hotel I have been miserably uncomfortable. Generally speaking I could not eat. I thought for a while that my stomach was wrong & that the stuffings I underwent at 7 o'clock at night, hurt me, but since I went down I did as I pleased, ate very little, never fish or soup, & yet I did not get well & on Saturday morn^g was so ill I had to tell— I imagined it was gravel & did not like to speak but c^d not go out with the Websters. On Sunday I was easier & came up by the 6 o'clock boat. Next day I made up my mind to tell M^{rs} Simpson who is as bashful as I could be & she told me her mother had to go to Sir Char^s Clark who cured her of what she supposed to be some thing of the same kind. She bid me speak to M^{rs} Webster whose husband is a sort of D^r & she w^d tell me what to do or speak to a D^r for me. I promised & came home here on a bus with Hargrave. M^r Alston was to dine with us. I got worse & H. bullied me into speak[ing] to M^{rs} Warren^r & get a d^r. She said I w^d require to be kept quiet & when D^r Smith came he felt & pressed my back gave me medicine to take every 4 hours—thro the night; ordered me into a luke warm bath prohibited my going out to Camberwell today & when he called this morn^g desired me if I got up to lie on the sofa. M^{rs} W- said if I had gone out today as I proposed in a coach, I sh^d have laid myself up most probably for a month. I daresay they are all in the wrong box, but I let them work away. The acute pain is over— If I am worse I will write in a moment or make M^{rs} Simpson do it if H- does not like, but I daresay there will be no more to say.

I had a letter from Mary Hamilton today. Rob^t has taken a farm— Kilberry is to be married in the end of July & set out immediately Marg^t & Mary are to follow in a few weeks. Mary is evidently in wretched spirits. They are to live in a miserable cottage on the estate of [illegible] & wish to get their house let furnished for the 2 years they have of the lease. Miss M^cKnight is delicate. Mary says it is all very well settling any where in one's own house but it is a different thing for Marg^t & her. Corbeth is displeasing his wife by declaring that he will not go to Edin^h next winter. They think Jane Anne in a bad way. I see by this days paper that her French admirer the Marquis de Bourbell has been caught in a swindling transaction with Graham of Greatmure & others.

Capⁿ Herd has just been here. He says he has laid in a good stock of dried fruit & preserved gooseberries for tarts. I c^d scarcely keep my gravity as there were 4 pies at his Mother in laws. Hargrave & M^r Christie have gone out to dinner. I fear I wont be able to go any where or at least that I wont get leave— London looks better than ever. The shops gayer & altogether so improved. Mousselines de laine are hung in the window marked “Novelty” & they are lovely—

Our ship leaves the Dock tomorrow week & sails on Sunday following— This is fixed. If I continue well I will not write till Sat^y. I fear you wont be able to read this as I am lying industriously hoping to get out to morrow, for combs & such small things. We will return to Gravesend the end of the week. M^{rs} Jⁿ Gibson continues alarmingly ill but it has turned out to be liver not heart complaint. She cant stand the remedies & the medical people w^d despair of any one but herself but she has made such recoveries that they still hope. I think I asked you if you w^d send me a recipe for making curry as I remember hearing that M^{rs} Tag had one. I am very fond of M^r Christie. His little girl seems very unwell & he is painfully anxious about her. He lost his son here last winter. M^{rs} Simpson is kinder than ever— she gave me a sketch of a visit she paid at Lord Selkirks.¹ The young ladies¹ keep her in misery, they look so contemptuously at her & the Lord and the Dowagers¹ kindness is quite lost on her in consequence. Her husband made her go there & then took her to Sir Augustus D’Este. She says the quiet natural elegance & kindness of D’Este was refreshing. She refused to go to the Selkirks as she had no decent shawl so the Gov^r presented her with one 3 pounds 5s. She was astonished having hard work to get gowns from him. She asks for every article & thought 8/6 a heavy sum for wee Fannys bonnet but c^d get none cheaper.

Give my love to Papa

L H

¹James Dunbar Douglas, sixth Earl of Selkirk. He was the son of Robert Douglas, fifth Earl, who founded the Red River Settlement. He was born in 1809, married in 1878, and died without heirs in 1885. He had two sisters, Isabella Helen (1811-1893) who married in 1841 Charles Hope, third son of the Earl of Hopetoun; and Catherine Jean, who was born in 1817 in Montreal. His mother, Jean Wedderburn, Countess (not dowager) of Selkirk, married the fifth Earl of Selkirk in 1807, and died in 1871.

16. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

Gravesend Friday 5th June 1840

My dear Mama

I have just got y^r letter enclosing Willie's & Polly's likewise one from Papa at Glas^w. I returned [from] West Ham yesterday & found them at last as kind as at first.

I feel very well, but still weak. They say I will only have to lie constantly for a few weeks & there is no danger of any return. It was inflammation of the kidneys & bladder caused by over exertion. D^r Elliot said distinctly that it was from no proneness to disease or in any way connected with my throat. He is an exceedingly clever man & M^{rs} Simpson was told on consulting Sir Char^s Clark that she need never speak to him or any other man while in Elliot's care. That was by Sir C. himself.

You may believe that I had my own suffering for a fortnight & likewise that had not M^{rs} Webster taken me in hand I w^d have had more as I never could have had courage to describe the symptoms & altho M^{rs} Warriner was very willing still she is a queer old wife & I did not like to be so explicit. The doctor was called Smith & was the image of Donald Smith.

Our future D^r Gillespie,¹ a reddish-hair long raw-looking boy covered himself with glory at the conference he had with Elliot who says he is perfectly educated, has not only a Diploma but has done as much towards graduating as M.D. as his years will admit of. Likewise he is son to a D^r Gillespie of Edin. who was flourishing in high repute 20 years ago when Elliot was there at College & moreover the son has been in Morven for awhile where he had 50 cases of scarlet fever & only lost one—a nursing baby. Elliot says he knows what he is about & comprehended my case at once. They had a long interview at M^r Webster's & parted mutually well pleased.

Hargrave saw the old D^r² at the Hud. B. House & says he looks well. You will probably have heard of him.

¹Dr. W. D. Gillespie was going to York with the Hargraves. He had been appointed surgeon there to succeed Dr. Cowie.

²Probably Dr. E. H. Whiffen ("with a most sapient length of nose"), whom Dr. Cowie had succeeded as surgeon at York. Dr. Whiffen had served previously at Red River and Moose Factory.

Marg^t Dunnet arrived on Monday so that I found her here. She has packed my clothes today very well indeed, the linens being put into $\frac{1}{2}$ the bulk that Hargrave managed. I am sure she will do very well, sews beautifully & is quiet & the people here say very easily pleased. I am very sorry to say that I dare not sit up to write to M^{rs} Tag, but shall if possible do so on my way to, or at Stromness. I have had to write to M^{rs} Webster today & must send only a very few lines.

Tomorrow there is to be a g^d dinner-party¹ at the hotel & as soon as the Capⁿ goes on board we are to be off. The wind is against our getting down, but may change in 24 hours.

M^{rs} Finⁿ is pretty well but I am terrified at what we shall have to witness on board, as her father, M^{rs} Simpson & some others are to see her off. Both her servants must sleep in her miserable little cabin as every hole on board is crowded.

M^{rs} S. told me that y^r bonnet is in the 1st of the fashion quite new. As for y^r other tippet you will be amazed at its elegance, it being very light indeed considering the thick fur the skin is as light as the sable.

Papa w^d tell you the genteel old house I have been living in. It is part of the old Abbey of West Ham.

In case you might like to know how my appetite was I must say that we breakfast[ed] at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 8, dined at 1, had ginger & oranges at 3, a piece of cake at tea at 7, biscuit at 9, with barley water thickened with gum lemon peel & sugar as often night & day as possible. I am to continue this & am to drink nothing else but this, living on glutinous farinaceous food—(There are 3 goats on board for milk.) never rising till after breakfast or sitting, to be either walking or reclining, there being no sofa on board I must lie on bed either on deck or in cabin. Margaret does not suffer from sickness.

Hargrave has written to Papa or I should have answered his Liverpool letter myself. The only thing I happened to hear M^{rs} Webster or M^{rs} Simpson speak of [wishing for] were salt herrings.

¹This dinner was given by the Directors of the Company as a "send-off" each year to their ships departing for Hudson Bay. Robert M. Ballantyne, in *Hudson's Bay; or every-day life in the wilds of North America* (2nd ed., Edinburgh, 1848), pp. 4-6, gives a good description of the dinner given the following year, when he entered the Service and went out to York. His book gives in detail many items touched upon by Letitia Hargrave in her letters.

I dont know whether M^{rs} W. may not get them from Scotland having property there, but I know M^{rs} S. cannot. M^{rs} W. does not approve of the wee pigs as she likes to use them fresh & cant as they are so fat. This is in answer to Papa's questions.

I am much distressed at the bonnets not being in time for Papa. He wished to take you home a cloke, but they were afraid to venture. There is such a variety black is generally worn but shawls prevail being made of silk with a raised pattern & very broad fringe. Their price being 4 guineas but they will soon be cheaper. I see ladies in crowds with the cloke like yours.

They had a great shine at M^r Hamilton's on Wednesday. Hargrave & M^{rs} Simpson were both speechless with headache all yesterday, so they blamed the champagne. M^{rs} H. is sister to the late Rev. Edward Irving.

M^{rs} Simpson poor woman, waited at the horrid Geo. & Vul^{re} to see me yesterday. She told me she cannot get her husband to say Grace & that having a party with the Hamiltons & Lauries she told him, as she had been disappointed in getting a clergyman that the Hamiltons &c. were people who w^d be miserable at getting no Grace. He promised if he c^d remember one. So she desired her brother-in-law who sat next him to remind him. He did so & the Gov^r in despair exclaimed "Lord have mercy on what is now before us," & looked quite satisfied, while she was in misery & did not recover self possession all night after.

I was very sorry to have to go to Essex while Papa was here. When M^{rs} Webster proposed it I thought I never could do it. Polly must wait till I am better able to write. If we dont sail I shall send a letter on Sunday. I will write Johnny tonight. Address to us on board the P^r of Wales Stromness care of Edward Clouston Esq.¹ Agent Hud. B. Coy Stromness Orkney.

Mon Klein sent me a translation of a German certificate of my piano which says that it is "an instrument wh^h will distinguish itself for its make & tone price-worthiness & capabilities of endurance of heat & cold." These are the terms . . . freight commission package tuning-hammer & set of extra strings, it has cost under £42. Rightly managed here it w^d have been only £40/16 but they sent it to the wrong wharf & the ship escaped so we had to

¹Edward Clouston succeeded John Rae as agent of the Hudson's Bay Company at Stromness about 1835.

pay its passage down here in a steamer.

I need not write more now. We have got no bill of y^r bonnet-box. Tell us if it reaches you, if not, I will send it from the Orkneys. Will you give my kindest love to Papa Polly Flora & the boys, likewise M^{rs} Tag. If I live I shall write Julian by the Canada express July a twelve-month. Perhaps if well I may send a letter by M^{rs} Finⁿ to Red River & w^{ch} will find its way.

My dear Mama your mo affec^{te} daughter

L. HARGRAVE

17. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

*Gravesend Saturday
Sixth June 1840*

My dear Mama

We are going on board in a little. The Directors seem to have left the ships as there has been a great deal of firing for half an hour past. It may be very well for those who have only to dine at the Clifton & return to London to hear guns but it has a different effect on me as I have suffered more today than I did even on leaving home. At least I have been more sensible of it & have had time to think of it—Hargrave would be much obliged to papa if he w^d send all the papers he can regarding the Church to Stromness. I dont know if those of the general assembly will be too old—to go by post. I forget if I told y^u that I bought some [illegible] seeds & got plants of myrtle rose & geranium from M^{rs} Webster's gardener packed in sand. Poor M^{rs} Sutherland when she saw my collection presented me with a flourishing geranium in a pot, w^{ch} I will have sore work hiding till I get on board as they will object to it at least Harg^{ve} will as he wishes nothing but scarlet runners— I hope they will do well. I have paid 4/6 for a white bonnet evidently an old one turned, but my own straw is so neat now that I am glad to save it. I have got a black *net* veil boots from Edin^h lined with lamb skin & think there is nothing further but I have got—M^{rs} Finlayson her father & sister have just come for me.

With love to all believe me ever dearest Mama

y^r m^o affec^t daughter

I am still better

L H

They have gone again but made me finish my letter. M^r Thomas¹ a very black young gentⁿ who goes with us the 2 M^r Simpsons & a M^r George [illegible], Miss Ross M^{rs} Simpson & M^{rs} Finlayson. They asked me to go & dine with them at the hotel, but I w^d not. We are all to go on board at six— Miss Ross² made her appearance in a very handsome crimson plaid & fawn colored satinet gown. M^{rs} Finlayson was perfectly calm & composed, her father is a very nice looking old man. I was interrupted again by D^r Gillespie calling, he sat for a long time & has now gone to join the dinner party. Every one is pleased with Capⁿ Herd, he is extremely anxious to do all he can for us, but cant disguise his hatred at female servants. We fear we will not get out soon, as the winds east. Will y^u have the papers & letters at Stromness as soon as y^u can as we expect to sail in a fort night at farthest from that [place]— I said we were to go in the P^{rt} of Wales, but it is the P^r Rupert. I am sure I will be much the better of M^{rs} Finlayson being on board, as Miss Ross looks rather fierce altho' good looking—She has a very degagé appearance. The poor Red river governess is the one I pity most. Both Miss Ross & she have horrid looking berths & I cant say our Marg^{ts} looks very comfortable, but it is better than theirs. I must now finish. I have written to Johnnie & M^{rs} Worsley—but could not either to Mary Hamilton or to Isabel Duncan from whom I had a letter some days ago. I was very glad that Polly is so much better & hope Hec^{rs} foot is well by this time. Hargrave was scandalized at y^r paying him the 12/— There was a good deal of money owing to papa, so he paid [for] the otter skin w^{ch} I am sure y^u will be pleased with. Did I tell y^u that his dividend this year amounted to £25— The Chief factors get £50— but the house is stuffed with furs & they will try to sell them in Autumn. They seem sanguine as good prices were had at Leipsic fair lately. There was [no] beaver at all like papas I looked at the uppermost & best of every heap & there were about 100 heaps of them each heap being at an average worth from £200, to £300. There was only one otter

¹Thomas Thomas of Red River, son of Thomas Thomas, retired governor of the Northern Department of Rupert's Land (see E. E. Rich (ed.), *Robertson's Letters 1817-22*, Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1939, pp. 243-4).

²Jane, second child and eldest daughter of Chief Factor Donald Ross, Norway House, born in 1823.

like yours & it was rather smaller tho perhaps a degree darker.

I dont think I can write again till we reach the Orkneys, but if an oppor^y occurs I will not let it escape. Hargrave desires me to give his love he wrote papa yester[day]. We have got the present of a setter dog from M^r Webster. I have promised faithfully to the boys that I should pet it. It has gone on board & is in good spirits. I remain my dear Mama most affe^{ly} y^{rs}

L H

18. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

*[On board the Prince Rupert Sunday, June 7 to 14, 1840
during voyage to Stromness.]*

My dear Mama

Soon after closing y^r letter yesterday I was honoured by a visit from Capⁿ Drew one of our directors who has charge of shipping. He is the image of Arthur Campbell in every respect, began by praising the ship & the Hon. Coy at large & ended by informing Hargrave that he never had full confidence in any man in the Indian country till he saw him well married & then followed his sentiments on my particular. They had just come from the dinner party & had consumed a vast deal of Burgundy & champagne— They had all got confidential for the Gov^r told Hargrave that he had made the wisest choice of any that had come from that country—adding that he believed he had deserved it better than himself as his habits had unfitted him for a domestic life by making him too arbitrary. This was before dinner & I was not present. If you knew M^{rs} Simpson you would wonder at his discontent as the worst that can be said of her is that she is not like him. I w^d almost say too good for him, not but what I like the Gov^r very much— Poor M^{rs} Finlayson has suffered a good [deal] all night & her little cabin is crowded & kept close by Miss Allen & Miss Ross taking possession & making such a noise. She suffers better than I w^d do in her case. Hargrave Marg^t & I came on board shortly after 6 last even^g. A chair was swung down, I was wrapt up in a flag & hoisted up from the boat. All the other ladies were on board, poor Miss Allen looking very anxious. It is plain to me that she is not suited for what she has

to do, a regular old maid & an old maid too of 50 without capacity to teaching much less organizing an establishment & managing old & young. If her predecessors are like her I dont wonder at the colonists disbanding them. She is not entirely a vulgar woman but a good natured ignorant person as much as her knowledge of things about us here are concerned. She made 2 or 3 voyages to Scot^d in smacks in her youth & is constantly enlarging upon them & complaining of the different accomodation here. She sat with a gay blonde cap & huge roses in the border & a dark mouseline gown. This morn^g she made her appearance in a bonnet of pink satin ribbon & a printed merino gown. Miss Ross is 17 rather a large Miss dressed in a muslin gown bare neck curls down her back slippers & cotton stock^{gs}. On deck she wears a very expensively trimmed bonnet, primrose gloves & a striped satin bag with lots of black lace & everything new. She is very forward & at the same time obliging. I came early to bed but got little sleep. H.^s berth & mine are in the same cabin mine is on the ground. Marg^t has one to herself & poor thing is quite delighted with it & has taken all my baggage into her berth w^{ch} leaves us more room. We got away from Gravesend at a q^r past 6 this morn^g. The wind is quite favourable but there is little of it. We scarcely feel the ship moving. I had tea & a bit of toasted bread to breakfast & am still in bed according to D^r Elliot's orders— The Mess is held in the cabin from which our berths are divided off by sliding doors. I never shut my door but draw the little white curtain before me & take it coolly, the other ladies will be suffocated as they are rather fastidious—

Monday $\frac{1}{2}$ past 3— We sailed all night & are now off Yarmouth Roads. The pilot is just going to leave us, we having had an unusually speedy passage & most beautiful weather. I do not feel so well in any respect today as yesterday & am not able to go down to dinner w^{ch} alone of all the ladies I did yesterday & eat well considering there was a rhubarb pie an immense size & very acid & good— The Capⁿ has been very happy in his walnuts figs & raisins— He has a large stock of little pigs a goat & 2 kids & will lay in a stock of poultry in the Orkneys. This day still beautiful. We went to bed at 10 & M^{rs} Finⁿ & I both slept well.

Tuesday. The pilot left us at 4 yesterday afternoon having earned £7 very easily for once. The even^g was beautiful. The

2nd Mate is a great performer on the violin & so is a common sailor, & the mate being genteel plays in the gun room if the ladies are down stairs & on the q^r deck if they are up. The drummer accompanies the common sailor & their concerts give g^t satisfaction. We came down last night at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 9 & for my part slept till past 8 this morn^g with few interruptions. I heard them speaking of salad at breakfast & on listening discovered that they really had lettuces. The 1st mate¹ is or ought to be a gentⁿ, nephew to Gov^r Pelly & was a midie on the E.I.Co^y Service— Miss Ross accuses him of great haughtiness & arrogance but to me he seems a good natured reckless looking boy— He has paid great attention to our dog Rose who took fright at the guns & rushed into a tar barrel, & in cleaning herself picked all the hair & skin off her feet so that she is in misery. I felt a little hungry & went down to tea where I had coffee & cold lamb & plenty of pickles & was greatly renovated. M^{rs} Fin. likewise took some & is better today but has a [illegible] inflammation of the spine attended with violent headache all which she bears more than patiently— She has a good deal of sickness. There has been a little rain this morn^g so as I have been sitting up more than did me good I shall stay in bed as long as I can bear to do so— I am getting accustomed to my berth. Marg^t is very satisfactory indeed & anxious to make herself useful to every one on board. She is very quiet & gentle & on excellent terms with the old duennas. She sews well & is always working & I never saw a woman more easily pleased than she is. She is wonderfully well educated & writes surprisingly. Miss Ross has made her appearance in a scarlet & green saxony cloak, bare neck in the cabin except a pink crape scarf & boots [illegible] elegantly glazed— She has brought rosewood dressing case & work box, pale grey satinet gown short sleeves &c. & paid 18/ for a scarf— Altogether her outfit is perfect— M^{rs} Fin says she means the lilac satin for her marriage dress— M^r Ross has not saved sixpence there, so he will not easily meet the consequences of her extravagance on the [illegible] dividend of this year. They breakfast at 8 dine at 1 & drink tea with cold meat at 6. I am always ready at 6, but never before that meal.

Wednesday. We were off Flamborough Head at 4 o'clock & sailed g^t part of that day at the rate of 5 or 6 knots an hour. Today

¹Henry Edward Boulton, appointed chief mate of the *Prince Rupert* in 1839.

we are only making about 3 but the little wind we have is quite in our favour, & has been ever since we sailed. We are now at 9 a.m. off the Coast of Scot^d I dont know where.

Thursday. 11. We were becalmed g^t part of yesterday but in the even^g the wind sprung up against us & we had to leave our course. It is miserable.

Sat^y 13. The vessel pitched so much these 2 last days that I c^d not write & was in bed the greater part. I have had nausea & went off appetite but my sickness has gone no further. M^{rs} Finlaysons maid¹ [is] a very fat discontented old dame who goes about declaring that she never before slept off a feather bed & the mattrass has hurt every bone in her body— The poor cook² is evidently a very different person, she is a widow & from what I can gather is going abroad because she does not like to work at home. Her hands are very pretty & she does not look like a serv^t yet she seems very cheerful, toils for every one & is constantly assisting the steward— M^{rs} F. w^d be in a scrape without her. I never saw a nicer looking woman about 50— There is a ball on deck every night the sailors dont work after 6 except about the sails. I never saw a happier or better looking set of men. They dance in the middle of all the pitching. There is a poor sailor who is a little deranged & whom the Co^y are sending home to Orkney. He is wrong on the subject of religion & he comes forward cap in hand to the mate & says “With the blessing of God if you please sir I will take a dance.” The whole crew Capⁿ & all are so attentive I find to the poor creature, as if he were the wisest among them. We have been carried far out to sea & the wind [diary breaks off here]

Miss Allan is the diversion of the whole ship. She has now put an old black shawl over the superannuated saxony cloth cloke w^{ch} is very short in spite of a y^d of cotton velvet at the skirt— She wears a black silk hood on deck, is always sick & always sniffing. She is so affected & foolish that unless she seizes him, even Hargrave will not walk on deck with her. The poor D^r who is very shy was decoyed into parading about with her & M^{rs} Finlayson heard his life has been a burden to him ever since as M^r Bolton the 1st mate has never ceased teasing him. He is

¹Mrs. Potter.

²Mrs. Turner.

tremendously tall & she very fat & dumpy. Had I been alone I c^d have got to live on shore at Stromness, but even if M^r Clouston were to ask Hargrave we c^d not go & leave so many here & he never c^d ask such a tribe of us. I am very sorry being completely sick of this ship. In our little cabin we cant dress & every one has to do so in the saloon as they call it— My berth is next to the Stewards pantry & the smell of old cheese &c. is insupportable. The wind came round in our favour yesterday but has changed today.

Sunday. We are now at 11 a.m. within a few miles of Stromness. We are all getting alive. The day is shockingly bad, wind cold & rain but we are all up writing, dressed to death & the ship pitching till I dont know where I sit. M^r Thomas has been in his own cabin for the last 3 days. We are to be here for a week & I am wearying for M^r Clouston to come on board as I expect letters from home by him. They have caught 40 huge cod besides many that have escaped with the hook in their throats. M^{rs} Finlayson was dreadfully ill yesterday. She was so feverish that I was terrified at her appearance. She is better today & whenever her illness passes away she is perfectly lively. There is a great change upon her, she is so very thin & her nose has got literally transparent. Hargrave says we are to go on shore & live at the best hotel we can get. I dont know whether the other two ladies mean to go but M^{rs} F. is to go with us. I have not been able to write to any one in London or M^{rs} W. or Loudoun—but shall do so tomorrow if I can. I shall write Papa next. I did not thank you for the curry recipe w^{ch} both the D^r & I perfectly understood. We can get every ingredient except the middle sized onion. I shall write M^{rs} Tag you may depend—

Believe me my dear Mama ever y^r most affectionate daughter

LETITIA HARGRAVE

19. TO MARY MACTAVISH

Ship Prince Rupert

Stromness 15th [- 17th] June 1840

My dear Polly

I wrote Mama yesterday & had just closed my letter when M^r Clouston came on board & pressed us all very much to go & live

at his house. Being 4 of us we were very reluctant, but being all connected with the Co^y it is decided that we are to accept. We are to go on shore & remain at his house till Sat^y night at 9, the ship being to continue her course on Sun^y morn^g. I am deeply distressed & troubled at what Papa says of your continued weakness & hope to hear before I leave this, exactly how you are & what is wrong with you. It is bad enough to have a long dreary winter without hearing of you even if I had [been] at all well but it will be much worse.

Wed. [June 17]. I had to stop where you will see the change of ink. M^{rs} Clouston came on board to dinner on Monday & we were all put into a chair with a flag wrapped about us & swung into the little boat. M^{rs} C. has been a very pretty woman. She has a daughter married to a M^r Clouston, a clergyman near. They seem in very respectable circumstances. A number of people called for us & we were at a tea shine at M^{rs} Rae's¹ one of the aristocracy here. There were about 18 people at supper— Her son Richard arrived a week ago from Canada. He was a friend of Hargrave's at York, but taking a horror at the Hon. Co^y left the Service & began business at Kingston as a banker but not succeeding attempted to get back. Harg^e did all man c^d but the Directors w^d not take him. They met here unexpectedly for he is going off on Monday & I shall write Merrian McTaggart as he says he will call in passing as he will be quite close to her & tell her where & how I am— I wish you had seen the supper last night. At the top was an ashet of carved fowls, cold veal at the foot, rice & milk boiled together jam & lots of preserves & spices in the said rice put in the centre of the table in a very grand chrystal dish, lots of what they called cold pudding & w^{ch} looked like *burnt* mashed *potatoes* with tarts &c. up & down— There was a lot of singing, M^{rs} Rae has been a beauty & is still a very pretty old woman. She has not a tooth in her head & you may imagine what my feelings were when in accordance with a slight request she began to sing with her finger before her mouth to keep her

¹Margaret Glen Rae was the widow of John Rae, whom Edward Clouston had succeeded as the Company's agent at Stromness. Three of her sons had also entered the Company's service: William Glen (see Rich, *McLoughlin letters, first series*, pp. 353-5), Dr. John (see Ross Mitchell, "Physician, fur-trader, and explorer," *The Beaver*, September, 1936, pp. 16-20, and p. 65), and Richard (see Glazebrook, *Hargrave correspondence*, p. 78). See also introduction, p. xxxiii.

tongue in I presume—the song being “He is low down, he’s in the broom” did not make me feel graver— She ordered me up on one hand & M^{rs} Finlayson on the other. Harg^{ve} was then ordered to sit by me & M^r R. Rae to say grace w^{ch} he did by looking very devout & saying “For what we *have* received Lord make us thankful”.

We are going to another friend of Harg^{ves} a M^{rs} Ballendean¹— She called this morn^g & invited us on Thurs^y Even^g. This is a dismal looking place. Marg^{ts} mother came down here— She has a sister here & 2 aunts at Wick so she came partly for the sake of her health & partly to see Marg^t so that she lives with me. She, I mean Marg^t is evidently most respectable. She is dressed on shore in a dark green merino gown & a Tuscan bonnet with white ribbons & looks very well— I am sorry to say that M^{rs} Finlaysons highly educated & most recherché cook that we all admired so much has been making vain glorious displays of ornaments, laces pale pink muslin gowns &c. to the sailors so as to alarm her neighbor M^{rs} Potter who confided to her mistress under promise of secrecy that Marg^t & she think it necessary for the sake of their character to cut her as much as possible. M^{rs} F. spoke to me & I have told Marg^t to counsen her & endeavor to entrap her into getting tipsy w^{ch} M^{rs} P. says she has already done, so that we may get rid of her before leaving this w^{ch} w^d be a comfort. Her mistress has been seized with a nervous headache & is in great distress. M^{rs} P. alleges that the 1st mate gives her drinks in w^{ch} case H. is resolved that he shall be completely smashed but I will write all to Mama. We are to sail on Monday— While the Capⁿ & Harg^{ve} were on shore last night, the steward says a bottle of brandy was stolen from the cabin, he was on shore too & is moreover a very steady man. I rejoice that Marg^t is not on board. She is very distant & reserved. Miss Allan has been the death of us all. She has actually broken out altogether & makes such a disturbance at table, especially. Imagine our feelings when on the cover being taken off a large plum pudding she shouted “Oh! not half boiled!” M^{rs} Clouston said very calmly like Mary Clark, that it had been

¹Widow of John Ballenden, governor at York, 1798-1803, and mother of Chief Factor John Ballenden (Fleming, *Minutes of Council*, pp. 426-7). Mrs. Ballenden never went to Rupert's Land, and died in 1853. (From John Ballenden's letter-book, 1850-54, and family records of Mr. L. B. Simpson).

long enough on the fire! Poor M^{rs} Finlayson who is a pattern as far as amiability & good breeding are concerned had a bad headache & in her distress took & finished what she got & every one of us but Miss Allan did the same. It was perfectly boiled & was declared by every one to be the best pudding they had ever tasted & so it was, but we are constantly affronted by her *M^cBrairism*¹.

The people here are a queer set. M^{rs} Clouston invited a party of 18 to dinner. They all accepted & 12 only sat down. Harg^{ves} friend M^r Rae & his brother in law sent an apology at a q^r before 4, the dinner hour but they w^d come to tea & supper. D^r Hamilton² the brother in law came about 8 but no apology for the Rae man or his friend. Rae was asked on H's account & I know M^{rs} Clouston had to make an apology to 2 very intimate friends from Kirkwell who, I daresay, called with the intention of staying, that she c^d not ask them for want of room. I shall expect to have a letter from yourselves & to hear how you are & what you are doing &c.

Harg^{ve} joins me in kindest love. Believe me ever my dear Polly,
y^r very affect^e sister

LETITIA HARGRAVE

20. TO DUGALD MACTAVISH SENIOR

Ship Prince Rupert

Stromness Monday 15th [to 18th] June, 40

My dear papa

We got y^r letter which had been sent to Gravesend and forwarded here by M^{rs} Sutherland. This morn^g is so stormy that we have been obliged to delay going on shore till after dinner that is about 2 o'clock. M^r Clouston took the Capⁿ and Hargrave on shore last night & they have persuaded him to go & stay at their house during the time we are to remain here— They had arranged that we sh^d have one room & that M^{rs} Finlayson Miss Allan & Miss Ross sh^d all sleep in a double bedded room, but as this w^d have been worse for M^{rs} F. than remaining on board, Hargrave has gone to say to M^{rs} C. that if she will give M^{rs} F. & me the room with 2 beds, & the other ladies the single one he will spend the

¹Mrs. McBrair was a neighbour at Kilchrist House.

²See introduction, p. xxxiv, n. 2.

day on shore & return to the ship with the Capⁿ at nine in the even^g. As far as I can judge by the arrangements, it is intended that we shall dine out every day. As the ship is a great favorite & a number of people here are connected with the Comp^y I w^d as soon stay where I am as sleep on shore. There is a great deal of bustle & confusion going on at present. Had we been 2 hours later (last night) we could not have got in harbour. The storm last night was dreadful, & it is expected that the Prince of Wales will be driven back here in the course of the even^g. I had no oppor^y of speaking to the Gov^r indeed I did not see him after you left us except with other people. Hargrave had a long letter from him but it was entirely on the business of the country.

Thursday [June 18]. I have never been able to get on with my letter as they dine here at 4 & all the morning there are people calling here all forenoon. M^r & M^{rs} Clouston are very kind especially the lady, who is a very nice woman— M^r Clouston says he has often heard of you in Edin^h. I had a long letter from M^{rs} Webster on Tuesday. M^r W. is again very unwell & they are to try change of air as they think that of Essex too relaxing—I am sure he will not live long as he cant eat & when he does nothing remains in his stomach. All the rest are well. M^{rs} Finlayson has had letters almost every day—her brother is not getting better, but he does not appear worse. We have been very much diverted with the people at Stromness. They are all extremely attentive & the way they entertain us is to tell us all the scandal of our predecessors who have called here. Of course M^{rs} Clouston does not do this but all the other people we have seen have repeated every word said by ladies or gentlemen & every thing they have done while here. We are now perfectly sick of hearing of Hudson's Bay— M^r Gairdner one of the ministers, is just Henry Beatson grown old, about 40. He is as like him in his manner as possible only that he speaks under his breath, & I dont know why for he looks as if he had great difficulty in keeping down his energy. Miss Allan who is going out to Red river, says she knows old M^{rs} Macalaster. She asked about her & told me her father had been a tenant of Brodies. I am sure the people at the Colony will be not at all pleased & the Gov^r has been very rash. He w^d not listen to what was said by his wife & her family altho' he desired them to see her & give their opinion.

I am much afraid that y^r letters from home may not be in time for us as we leave this on [word missing]. Every day, I think I am to get a letter, but have only heard from London—As the post does not always get across the water I am apprehensive too that the wind may prevent its reaching us at last, as very often they are a week without communication with the mainland—This day has been so stormy that neither the Capⁿ nor Hargrave has been able to leave the ship as yet, & I daresay they will be wet if they venture in the even^g—Hargrave said he would write Mama by this days post. There is so much confusion in the house that I cant write. M^r Clouston gets all letters going to Hudsons bay sent here & the myriads that have poured in are not to be counted. We have turned poor M^r & M^{rs} Clouston out of their own room, & I am sure they wish us on board the Prince Rupert again. M^{rs} C. has a great deal of good sense. She has only 2 servants & they are Orcadian, but she works away before us—& allowed me to help to shell the pease in the drawingroom. We all like her very much & notwithstanding all she has done for us I at least have never felt at all embarrassed nor in the way. One of her sons¹ went out to Hud Bay 2 years ago & spent the winter with M^r Ross. On finding that Jane was his daughter she seemed very glad & altho' she does not make any difference in her treatment of her from her friend Miss Allan, she has given her shawls to take to her mother & little sisters. I am ashamed of my letter it is so crushed but I have carried it so much about never having peace to finish it. We are all going to morrow to dine at M^{rs} Char^s Clouston whose husband is a minister 6 miles away— I shall write Mama & Flora—& feel very much disappointed at not hearing from you. I am joined by Hargrave in kindest love, he came on shore to go to M^{rs} Ballendeans with us.

With love to all I am y^r m^o affec^{te} daughter

LETITIA HARGRAVE

¹Robert Clouston was stationed for the winter of 1838-9 at Norway House.

56 LETTERS OF LETITIA HARGRAVE

21. LETITIA HARGRAVE'S DIARY KEPT ON BOARD SHIP,
JUNE 22 – JULY 26, 1840

Ship Prince Rupert, Stromness, 22nd June 1840

Monday— Yesterday so bad that we c^d not venture out in an open boat so that we came on board this morn^g at 7 oclock, but c^d not move for contrary wind.

23rd Had a letter for Flora to be sent by the pilot but he went on shore before we had been out 2 hours & I was so sick that I c^d not finish it, very bad day. All of us ill.

25th In bed all yesterday & g^t part of today. Ship pitching so that we c^d not dress— The most provoking part is that we have been beating about waiting till the P^r of Wales came out of Stornaway. M^r Harg^{ve} & the Capⁿ went on board of her lest any letters might have been forwarded there from Stromness, but only got a parcel of shortbread from Capⁿ Royal for the ladies here— Nice food for 4 sea sick women. Never knew what sailing was before.

July 2nd Shoals of bottle nosed whales playing about the ship. Wind has been westerly ever since we left Orkney.

7th On Thurs^y the wind began & we have had a constant gale since. No sail almost & at night close reefed. The Capⁿ says he never saw such a sea, but the waves are whole like large broad hills, lost our jib—sea getting better.

10th Wind southeast Longi^{de} 28 & 54. Good deal of south^e wind. The other ladies sick. 8 knots an hour. Foggy. No observation.

11th 2nd pig killed today. Fresh pork & fowls tho' the latter old & tough. We have only had salt beef once on b^d Longi 35 & 56.

Sunday— longi 37 & a $\frac{1}{2}$. All the ducks & geese are allowed to walk about deck on Sunday. Miserable objects, their bills white & whole appearance wasted. When they got out they picked their feathers & ducked down on the deck thinking themselves in the water. M^r Bolton likened the procession to Bells Sunday School— I shall note down a weeks bill of fare as we have a *diet* for every day. Breakfast ham & egg potatoes, tea & coffee biscuit & treacle w^{ch} we always have morn^g & even^g Dinner. Fowl soup boiled hens, roast ducks, salt pork, plum pudding, always mashed

potatoes, cheese wine almonds raisins & figs. Crossing the American line W- wind.

13th Day very bad. Breakst *Pigs fry*, meaning liver lights &c. fried together—cold beef. Dinner. Cold round, pease soup, curried pork & rice, Rhubarb pudding.

14th Potato & fish beat together called here twice laid, to breakst Hen soup & fried tripe, rice pudding. High wind 200 miles south of Farewell. Pickled leg of pork, pease pudding, Cherry pie. Longi 43 & 16. Wind right ahead close reefed topsails & no mizzen. Other ship lost part of her rigging.

15th Breakst Ham & egg— Dinner pease soup, roast pork currant pudding no observation. M^{rs} Finⁿ ill & Miss Allan also in bed Miss Ross rheumatism & I all sore sitting on wood bottomed chairs.

16th *Portable* soup Pillau (hens pork rice mixed) a round of beef, suet pud^g

17th Lob scones to breakst Irish stew, salt fish fried tripe & pancakes. Wind aft. stormy. Long^t 48— On deck for an hour very cold. Har^v has been ill yester^y & today. Spoke to the D^r.

18th Rather better but he did not come to breakfast. Porridge treacle, 2ce [twice] laid. Dinner salt beef pease soup, fried tripe. Longi^{de} 56½ Latitude 58—

19th Curried pork to breakfast or ham & egg on Sunday brown biscuit soaked in water & put into the oven. Hargrave getting better. Longi 57—dead reckoning. Saw M^r Spences (2nd mate) log. Curious spelling— He says, weather [illegible] to calm, men employed as most youseful (useful). Fog so dense that no observation has been had to be relied on for 4 days. Ships quite close.

21st Pettitoes to b^{kfst} Intensely cold & Misty at times. Quantities of ice before us, but so distant that the Capⁿ only saw it by telescope from the top-mast. Longi 60 & 12.

22nd Went on deck before 8 A M to see a large ice berg. Miss Allan describes it as being like a hay stack. It was about 160 feet above water & an oblong square plenty of ice all round.

Sunday [July 26]. Resolution Island seen from top the entrance to the straits.

22. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

York Factory Septem^r 1840

My dear Mama

We arrived here on Monday the 10th of Augst after an unusually short passage. We got on shore meaning stuck on the bar on Sunday evening 15 miles from York, fortunately the bottom was soft mud & except that there was much confusion & the men took the oppor^y to get tipsy, the weather being calm we lay quietly altho' a good deal on one side, & no harm was done. In consequence of our guns, M^r Finlayson & Willie came off in a small boat about 9 at night. They remained all night but W^m returned at day light with the despatches— We waited for the afternoon tide & left the ship at 4 oclock sticking fast. She got off next morn^g & reached York in 3 hours & I can give you very little idea of my feelings as for some days or weeks I had been so wretched that Hargrave thought if I went on shore at all it w^d have been rolled & carried in a blanket. I could neither eat sleep nor speak & my pulse was often 120. I c^d not take medicine as I told you we had the cuddy for our cabin & the Mess was there & the Capⁿ always in it. My 1st exploit on being lowered into the yawl, was to turn my back to the company & cry myself sick. After which I began to look about me & feel less disconsolate. I had no sooner got out of the yawl than I felt better & have ever since got stronger & as for fatness I am getting on well & my neck is as well covered as when I left Stromness.

On reaching the Quay here we found M^r Gladman & a M^r Manson¹ Chief trader from F^t Vancouver who goes home by the ship this season. Hargrave introduced them both & then took Miss Ross & me away up. On looking round we found M^r & M^{rs} Finlayson behind together, M^r Gladman & Miss Allan, & M^{rs} Potter & M^r Manson likewise arm in arm. Poor M^{rs} Potter had resisted M^r Mansons politeness as long as she civilly could, but after walking a few paces she said she would wait for Marg^t & M^{rs} Turner & by this means gave him a hint of which he availed himself but he nevertheless escorted them to the Fort—

¹Donald Manson was at York waiting to go on furlough by the ship; and was in charge of packing the furs while there. For biography, see Rich, *Simpson's Athabasca journal*, p. 458.

Dugald certainly asperses Willie when he accuses him of reserve. At least there is nothing of the kind to me, he is quite open & frank & except that he looks older than I had expected he has not in my opinion lost his looks. He looks stout & strong, [his] expression w^{ch} I think used to be mild, is now knowing and acute. He seems very active & pads about as if he had the whole charge of the Factory, & is in the store from $\frac{1}{2}$ past 4. A.M. till 8 at night, but this will not long be the case & the summer work will soon be over. I w^d not have known him altho' Hargrave sent him down to the Gun room where I was waiting expressly for him, I w^d not have ventured to speak. He says he w^d never know he had seen me before & was greatly shocked by the thin cheeks & hollow eyes I brought on shore. Not to speak of my fingers w^{ch} were so reduced that I lost my rings punctually when in bed & had to get them tightened with ribbon. W^m had a letter from John by the ship, he had had an attack of fever in Feb^y but he wrote in good spirits & was quite well again. It was by far the best written letter I had seen from him, & there was no misspelling from 1st to last. I hope that wherever it may be my lot to go I shall never be shut up in a cabin with 3 ladies & servants. The constant clack clack & the impossibility of being one moment alone had worn me out completely. Had I had the power to get a little time to myself I w^d not have been so miserable, but if I were $\frac{1}{2}$ dead & lay down on my berth— one or other of them was sure to squat on the ledge of my bed & all out of kindness.

M^{rs} Finlayson was very kind & gave indeed pressed me to lie down all day in her bed but somehow I never did so but when she compelled me. Her husband & she were both very kind, & altho he was in charge here we had our own house—at least the larger part & he even offered to leave it altogether.

The mosquitoes were nearly over but M^{rs} F. & Miss Allan suffered a good deal. Indeed the latter had to get D^r Gillespie as her face & eyes swelled as if she had been stung by bees. They did not touch Miss Ross or me. The day after our arrival, a boat from Norway House brought M^r Evans¹ a Wesleyan missionary who is there with his family, consisting of his wife &

¹The Reverend James Evans had been appointed superintendent of Wesleyan missions in Rupert's Land in 1840, with headquarters at Norway House. See E. R. Young, *The Apostle of the north* (Toronto, 1899), pp. 110, 198-200.

daughter a Miss of 17. He dined with us next day & M^{rs} Finⁿ as usual began her lamentations about M^{rs} Turner having turned out such a light frivolous character that she was resolved to send her home again. The minister said nothing but next morn^g asked M^r F. if he would allow him to take her to Norway House as his servant. M^r F. told him plainly that he was sending her back in consequence of having been drunk on board & having stolen rum from the steward. M^r E. was nothing daunted, said she w^d have no temptations at his house & that she might reform. She is a regular cook & he agreed to give her M^r F's wages viz. 20 guineas.¹ Poor wretch she left this in a boat with him & 19 men on the 18th in dreadful weather, one foot a sore of broken chilblain. I think she has not met with sympathy. I neither liked her nor the other who is a grumbling discontented hypocritical sinner, & told Marg^t that M^{rs} F. "was no lady" altho' the poor thing seems to take greater care of her than herself. The constant fightings that went on were sickening. M^{rs} Potter is particular about her fare & says she cares not where she goes if she gets good meat & a comfortable feather bed— Marg^t is very satisfactory & quiet, works very neatly & is a great hand at making drawers flannels &c. & sorting M^r Hs clothes having learned from her father— She will have a very easy time of it as she has nothing to do, but our bedroom & the stove is lighted at 5.A.M. by the butler, an elderly conceited Canadian called *Gibout*² an old servant of Uncles. When we landed Hargrave was shocked at the change in Crosbies³

¹For Mrs. Turner's subsequent career in the country see Glazebrook, *Hargrave correspondence*, p. 356; and introduction, p. lvii.

²Edouard Guilbault, a Canadian, was in the service of the North West Company under John George McTavish at Fort William in 1820. He was retained by the new Hudson's Bay Company in 1821, and served under McTavish at York. He attended Governor Simpson's party to Peace River in 1828, and helped to build lower Fort Garry in 1831-2. He was back at York in 1833-4. Hargrave to McTavish, August 5, 1834: "This poor fellow [Guilbault] has also broke loose again from his bonds anent Liquor, and I must try to re-reform him. I fear me 'twill be as knitting ropes of sand." Simpson to Hargrave, September 6, 1834: "George [Thorne] tells me that Jibbot has been repeatedly disordered in his intellect since he went to York, it will be necessary to watch him closely." He remained at York serving as butler until 1845. For his later career see introduction, p.000. For a description of Guilbault as a waiter on the voyage to Canada in 1845 see Ballantyne, *Hudson's Bay*, 2nd ed., p. 238.

³Crosbie had been sent out to York in 1838 as cook.

appearance, & on speaking to the D^r he said he was threatened with consumption & must leave the Coast & go to the Interior. Crosbie resisted but must go as they may kick their servants about as they please. Willie says he is a great blackguard but he was a good servant & looked highly civilized. Nevertheless I like old Gibout best, he is very respectable & the delight he takes in toiling for me is refreshing. Crosbie cooked well particularly in the article of tarts, the very look of w^{ch} are enough for me, I was so sickened with rhubarb in Londⁿ & on board— The usual dinner for our mess meaning the 3 ladies & me was—a roast of venison at the top 3 geese at the foot, 4 ducks on one side 6 plovers on the other, a large Red river ham (whole leg) & potatoes & mashed turnips or boiled lettuce. For something green when they have broth they put lettuce & the bitterness is surprizing— They have radish & lettuce after dinner.

I am getting a superfine blue cloth gown but do not see how I am to wear it as I cant bear a cap on my head, the room is so close, & the fires quite small. There are 3 windows in it. We have 2 sittingrooms, but the kitchen in our house is not used except in Winter. Marg^t has had fires in it all along. It is very large. I had nearly forgot to say that we had sermon from M^r Evans the Sunday after our arrival. In illustration of the ingratitude of the human heart he reminded us of how unnecessary it was to tell children to ask for what they wanted & what labor it cost to make them express feeling of thankfulness. For instance how constantly parents had to desire them to say "Thank you Sir" & "Thank you Ma'am". I c^d scarcely help laughing at the simplicity. He preaches well but quietly as if he were addressing them.

I only observed one or two $\frac{1}{2}$ breeds, one was a woman the only female except ourselves & M^{rs} Potter & Marg^t. She had a baby with her & its unhappy legs wrapt up in a moss bag. It looked like a mummy. I have not been near enough to inspect closely but I shall make Marg^t fetch a child over without the mother that I may examine it. The moment it is born they get the bag stuffed with soft moss w^{ch} has been in readiness & stuff the wretch into it up to the neck, bind it tightly round like a mummy, so as to make it as firm & flat as a deal board, then fasten it around their own back & work away about what they have to do. They

dont mind the moss being wet & dirty but consider it a great convenience that they have no trouble shifting [it] at least for a long time. The Indians all walk wth their feet turned in from this discipline & their arms are as stiff as if there was not a joint in them. While the whites gentle & simple are running about perspiring with haste the Indians stalk along the platforms with their backs bent as if it were entirely for pleasure that they were wheeling barrows. They march so slowly & look so stately that they remind me of people on the stage. The women always come to the Fort in pairs, the older 1st the younger behind her & they also look very dignified & demure. The men wear long blue capots like childrens surtouts (very long) & hoods either hanging down or on their head, scarlet leggins, not trowsers & gay scarlet military sashes round their waist. Squaws never move without their blanket common coarse often dirty affairs. They fold them like a scarf, not a shawl. The wee'est girls have them. One of the pigs comes to my window with red currants in the corner of hers w^{ch} is black with dirt. Hargrave bought 2 lbs of peppermint drops at Stromness & they laugh aloud when I give them some. They dont know a word of English or French. When I want flowers or berries I show them a specimen & give them a shove & off they go. It never happens that they fail.

I was much surprized at the "great swell" the Factory is. It looks beautiful. The houses are painted pale yellow. The windows & some particular parts white. Some have green gauze mosquito curtains outside & altogether the effect is very good. Our house is a good size, 1 bedroom off each sitting room & men servants rooms off the kitchen a very large closet off the diningr^m I had nearly forgot my piano.² It is a very fine one & the handsomest I ever saw. The wood is beautiful & M^r Finlay[son] is croaking for one the same. M^{rs} F does not play except to accompany herself. I was astonished at its appearance as I did not expect the case to be any great thing. The hinge of the lid, & the lock have created a sensation among the geniuses here from the uncommon elegance of their contrivance & mechanism. There was not a scratch upon it nor a note out of tune. The form of the pedal is magnificent & the wood beautifully marked. M^r Gladman

¹A letter from Hargrave to J. Klein dated September 6, 1841, described it as "a square mahogany piano of 6½ Octaves, made in Vienna."

has a barrel organ in w^{ch} are a drum & some other instruments. It is never silent, the family imagine themselves so fond of music. Willie maintains that it was nothing but weakness & want of sense that made Gladman cause the disturbance between Uncle & Dugald. The whole family make it their duty to gather gossip & to detail it to all & sundry— Gladman heard some stories of Dug^d as he did of others & repeated them to Uncle who without inquiry attacked Dug^d who made no attempt to explain or as others w^d have done denied at once when every thing was false. But he quarrelled & scorned them. Willie says Gladman has always been kind & friendly to him & has no idea he did any harm to Dug^d. At any rate Uncle & he are great enough now. I daresay M^r Christie has been at Kilchrist. One of Uncles wives was sister to his wife—¹

When papa was in London M^{rs} Webster told him that they thought I was in the family way. I did not myself think so, & from my illness on my way from London to Stromness I suppose I was right. Now however I have no doubt of it. D^r Gillespie is very clever. He had an interview with D^r Elliott who thought him as intelligent a person for his age as he had met with. I dont think he is above 23. He looks curious but is very agreeable & nothing c^d be more attentive than he was on the voyage. His father is Kilberry's Edin D^r & he was a g^t friend of D^r MacIntosh. I am taking more iron powders & he says I am as well as I could possibly be. I feel that I owe my being extant at all to M^{rs} Webster & D^r Elliott. I had a long letter of instructions from her at Stromness & have not had the slightest return of my London complaint. My throat is also well & on looking at it for the 1st time since I left Lonⁿ I found it away to nothing not the slightest remains of swelling & the cold I suffered on board was past mentioning. M^{rs} Finⁿ & Miss Ross c^d not stand a fire for fear of gun powder & as I was constantly taking *dwams* even at dinner from perfect cold among the ice, the D^r always ordered a fire as he said the

¹As Governor Alexander Christie's marriage to Anne Thomas, daughter of Governor Thomas Thomas (Rich, *Robertson's letters*, pp. 243-4) was confirmed by the church at Red River on February 10, 1835 (H.B.C. Arch., E. 4/1, Red River Register of Marriages, fo. 243, no. 293), this former wife of John George McTavish was therefore a daughter of Governor Thomas. Letitia refers to her again in letter 26.

64 LETTERS OF LETITIA HARGRAVE

dampth from the bare floor which was constantly washing & never dry was enough to hurt me, yet as M^{rs} F's feet & hands were covered with chilblains & she w^d not have a fire on her own account, I w^d not allow her to be applied to on mine. I will write papa Polly & Flora. I was very glad to get y^r letter the day we were to leave Stromness.

Hargrave joins me in kindest love to you & the boys & believe me ever dear Mama y^r m^o affec^{te} daughter

LETITIA HARGRAVE

6th Sept— Willie has asked me to enclose the bill. It is for your benefit. He has a share in the concern on the Columbia¹ & has 40 besides in case he should have to travel. They get no good as yet from the Columbia affair not even interest for his £ 20— The packet is to be closed today. Willie is a great shot & is going off with a tent to shoot for a week or two— I had the head of the sheep we gave the ladies away with them, made into barley broth for my dinner these 2 last days. They skinned & cut the meat into pieces like mock turtle, brains & all.

I have been suffering from head sickness for some days back so that I could scarcely sit up, but I am better today. M^{rs} Gladman² told Hargrave I sh^d not get up so soon. We breakfast at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 7 but there is such bustle from 5.a.m. that I cant rest, & I often with the heat fall asleep about 6 o'clock p.m. while reading or even working.

y^r ever affe^c daughter

23. TO FLORENCE MACTAVISH

York Factory 1st [to 5th] Sept^r 1840

My dear Flora

I began and continued a sort of diary but in the hubbub of leaving the ship and my being so unwell that I c^d do nothing


¹The Puget's Sound Agricultural Company (see Rich, *McLoughlin letters, second series*, pp. 15-16).

²Harriet, wife of George Gladman, was the daughter of Governor Thomas Vincent and his wife Mary, daughter of John McNab, governor of York, 1802-8. This information is from records kindly made available by Mr. V. L. Gladman.

M^r Hargrave & Marg^t lost the sheet containing our adventures in Hudⁿ Straits so that I must remember what I can. On first entering we were becalmed among the ice & lay 2 days off Savage islands. For 24 hours night & day we were beset wth Huskies. They were heard shouting for at least 2 hours & a $\frac{1}{2}$ before they reached us w^{ch} they did in light canoes with a hole in the middle. Each holds one man & a few tusks of ivory (walrus teeth) w^{ch} they brought to traffic. There were 34 canoes— We moved so slowly that they kept up with us all the time— 3 hours after their arrival the luggage boats came up manned by women & laden with children husky dogs images or dolls in imitation of themselves— There were several large boats holding the various families of the gents in the light ones. Almost every woman had a huge fat child in her hood¹ & when they saw anything in the sailors hands that they wanted they seized the babies, pulled off their one article of dress, shrieking *pilly tay* (give me) threw the weans who squalled like any white back into the hood. If they did not get quiet they put their breasts some how over their shoulders & continued their *pilly tay*. When a saw was shown them the whole fleet got into commotion & screamed *cutty swaback*. A gimblet, was *billy linga*. They w^d give any thing for them but poor wretches except a few seal skins & the walrus teeth they had nothing worth trading— When they got any thing a broken pair of rusty scissors or horrid old iron off a barrel (the hoop) they rubbed their tongue over it. They use their boots as y^u used to do y^r wide sleeves that is put every thing into them, pot lids & darning needles. I gave one some needles he tried to stick them into his trowsers but always pricked his fingers, so after licking both finger & needles, he said *coonah* looking very knowing, & handed them over the ships side to his coonah (wife). They were evidently quite ignorant of the use of water & nothing more horrible than the old black dirt of the ladies can be imagined. They rub themselves all over with grease & from the hood being always dragged down by the child's weight their necks & shoulders are blackened

¹I am much indebted to Dr. Vilhjalmur Stefansson for kindly identifying the Eskimo words, and showing that Letitia reported them with considerable accuracy. He pointed out, however, that Letitia made a mistake still commonly made in saying that the naked baby was in the mother's hood. It is actually carried against the mother's naked back.

by wind & weather. I got a doll & will see if it can get a place among the tongues.¹ The hood is on the head & the tail behind is too short, but the carriage & shoulders are the very thing & the shape of the face. They keep bawling *Chimoo Chimoo*, signifying good & aha when pleased w^{ch} indeed they always seemed. The men looked well each in his beautiful canoe but the women gathered together in the luggage canoes were hideous, the children like Johnnie M^cBride in feature & color.

While the canoes were round us a shouting & yelling arose & off they all paddled towards a berg, where on looking thro' a glass an unfortunate seal was discovered. Their clamor stupefied the animal & he stood quietly till they harpooned him on w^{ch} he fell head over feet off the ice into the water. Any thing like the rapidity of their progress I never saw. All the mens canoes were there. They cut the seal up, eat what they wanted (they dont cook) & then divided the remains faithfully among them. When they returned to the ship each man had a lump of red seal behind him. Every moment they w^d put a hand back rub it over the store & lick the fat & blood off the paw with great satisfaction— We had great difficulty in getting rid of them, they followed & made such a noise & the smell they left was insufferable all about for days. Altho' only one man had been allowed to come on board yet he managed to drag his wife up by a leg & arm. Hargrave & I were standing on a pigs house when she came up & before I c^d escape she had her arms about my waist dancing & singing till I thought we sh^d have either got over board or down among the pigs— They plait their hair in tails both before & behind & are certainly well sized & not the wretched looking objects they are often represented. They are a little fat I confess, but had they been clean they w^d many of them have looked well particularly the men who seem very strong— They wear often a queer sort of spectacle to save their eyes, w^{ch} are probably affected before they put them on by the snow both on land & water— It is a piece of wood this shape  these narrow slits to see thro'. Indeed I have given y^u the idea that the slits are wider than they really are as y^u w^d wonder how they c^d see at all. They all appeared very happy & good natured to each other.

¹Hargrave sent a present of smoked buffalo tongues, a valued product of the plains of Rupert's Land, to Kilchrist House each year.

The day we got out of the Straits was very rough & we were all in bed sick. It was by far the worst day I had for constant sickness. We were 6 days crossing the bay & during that time—the fog was so dense that we got no observation so that it was an agreeable surprize when on Sunday 9th the sun appeared & at noon we found ourselves 20 miles north of York & *the* beacon¹ in sight— We arrived at the bar about 6.P.M. that even^s but on crossing the tide had turned & there we were ashore. It was alarming as she lay much on one side but providentially the night was calm. Next morn^s however she did not get off & we left her in the yawl at 4 oclock & after partly sailing partly rowing we reached this about $\frac{1}{2}$ past 7.

I forgot to say that on Friday we got into some very thick ice & feared that we might have been kept. The bells were kept ringing for a while by the thumps but by dint of management we escaped. A large white bear came out on the ice. We had seen one in the straits & by my running on deck I got a few days threatening of an attack of earache but it was very slight— M^{rs} Finlaysons hands & my feet suffered dreadfully from chilblains. They broke & swelled so that I had to wear mocassins & she c^d not put on her gloves. This was in the straits. I had to wear my fur tippet in the cabin & every thing else I c^d get the others sported blanket shawls— M^{rs} F having been deluded into paying £13, 13— for a cloth cloke grudged to wear it & in fact it was such a weight that she c^d not go up the steps with it— I now have not a hap, wear my black shawl when I go out & the thin cotton drawers & mousseline gowns w^{ch} have struck astonishment into every one by their showiness. We were only once damaged by the ice. I was in bed & the shrouds & scuppers at my side were torn away— Nothing c^d be more wearing out than the never ending bump bump bumping & then rumbling under or past us— Sleep was impossible. It was like the loudest thunder & the ship quivering & flying right back w^{ch} is always a good thing as she is less liable to injury. The water was beautifully smooth, not a ripple upon it & the shape of the different pieces of ice large & small very

¹W. J. Healy, *Women of Red River* (Winnipeg, 1923), p. 192: "When we anchored at last in York Roads, twenty miles from the factory . . . only the high beacon twelve miles away on the point between the Nelson and Hayes rivers was visible from our ship."

diverting to those who c^d sit & look on deck. M^{rs} Finlayson had a horror at being blown up & as there was gun powder under our cabin w^d not listen to the proposal of a fire. I was sure I w^d die of cold, the D^r insisted on my having one, and from the first made a hubbub about my sitting & sleeping in the state of health I was in, in a room w^{ch} was washed 2ce a week & never dry, as there was no window but the sky light. One day I got faint at dinner & had to scud into my berth so the D^r fought & had a fire & I got thawed & never suffered from extreme cold for the few days we were longer on board. M^{rs} F did not know, at least I think she did not that the D^r considered it necessary for me or I am sure she w^d have resigned herself. She was very kind & often distressed me by sitting up that I might be comfortable in her bed w^{ch} of course was more comfortable than mine— She suffers a great deal from spine (inflammation of it) & I am certain the hard wooden bottomed chairs must have hurt her— She is so frightened for people making any comment upon her that she w^d not take my way & sit on a pillow & I found myself driven to this, for a whole day on a hard seat was not very pleasant & the recollection of D^r Elliotts lectures & M^{rs} Websters on the very subject—

I shall write Papa & Polly the rest of what I have to say altho it is not much. Willie is writing home— He comes in here & has a refection of milk & water currant loaf & marmalade in small quantities but the ladies only left us on Sunday & he had no satisfaction in visiting me while they were about.

I have written on scroll paper in consideration of postage. Give my love to Hector & Alex^r. I often wish very sorely that I c^d see Alex^r & many a good volley Willie gives me for saying it. I know I will like York as well as any other place if I ever get over the constant wish to hear from you. Hargrave I think will go back to Scotland at last if we live but at the very soonest that will not be for ten years. Of course I mean to remain— I fear you will hardly read this.

With kindest love from Hargrave & myself believe me ever
My dear Flora

Y^r m^o affec^{te} sister

LETITIA HARGRAVE

5th Sept—I took the lightest paper I c^d find but still I fear the postage will be considerable if I cant succeed in smuggling Polly & yours. If you could send off one letter on the 14th of May next the new ships¹ may sail earlier than the old. I hope the sleeping rooms will be much superior to the last as it is impossible to give y^u a notion of the misery after leaving the beautiful room & bed at West Ham. To be sure there is a difference between an old Abbey w^{ch} M^r Webster's house is & an old ship where the berth was so narrow that I c^d not lie on my back without hurting my shoulders.

M^r Cochran² chaplain at Red River has written a long letter to Hargrave on the subject of how I sh^d be treated. What ever wrong I may [do] he is to be sure it is half his fault so that I am to [be] in peace & H. is to have all the remorse. When the Gov^r & M^{rs} Simpson were there he had promised [to] dine but as the day was fearful with wind & snow & he had many miles to travel they did not wait so at 8 o clock he made his appearance in their room & they made no attempt to conceal their amazement. So he told them that as his horse c^d not travel he had come on his cow, having promised that he w^d do so. So he demanded a cup of tea & said that having seen them he w^d return immediately. They pressed him to stay all night but he said he had promised his wife that he w^d go home, so off he set on his devoted cows back.

¹Simpson to Hargrave, January 15, 1840: "at the Board today. . . I suggested that the next shipment should be curtailed so as to enable the *Rupert* to perform the whole of the transport for York of 1840; that as that ship is not well adapted for the Trade she be sold on her return from the Bay, that in the meantime two ships of easy draft of Water and of the same class as the *Columbia* & *Vancouver* be immediately laid down so as to be in readiness to proceed to York in '41." William Smith to Hargrave, February 13, 1841: "We shall still have a P. Rupert it being intended to perpetuate the name in one of the Vessels to be launched next month."

²The Reverend William Cockran was born at Chillingham, Northumberland, England, in 1798. He arrived at Red River in 1825 to assist the Reverend D. T. Jones; and spent his life in the work of the Church of England there. He became an archdeacon in 1857; and died at Westbourne, Manitoba, on October 1, 1865. He was buried at St. Andrew's Church on the Red River, which he had founded in 1831, and where the work he initiated is still carried on in the third church he built on the site, in 1849.

24. TO MARY MACTAVISH

York Factory 1st Sep^r 1840

My dear Polly

I have written Mama and Flora & determined to send my letters to F & you by a private hand even at the risk of their being lost. Willie was here for a long time on Sunday night, he had been in the store packing up furs w^{ch} had arrived from Mac-Kenzies river & seemed to fear that he w^d not be able to write home. They expect that the ship will sail on Friday or Satur^y at latest. I wish it was off as I can get nothing done every one is so busy— The ladies did not leave us till Monday & I was pretty sick of Misses Allan & Ross. As the Finlaysons had one sitting room & bed room we of course had but one too & altho' the others had a room each & parlor between them at the other side of the Fort, yet they came here at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 7 A. M. & remained generally till $\frac{1}{2}$ past 9 at night unless Hargrave put them out while he was busy, & the moment he left the house they were back at me. The more I might be ill or wish a little peace the surer they were to persecute me & the favorite subject was a lamentation about what I sh^d suffer from loneliness when they left me. M^{rs} & M^r F— both repeatedly told Miss Ross that altho' they eat here, that they ought not to torment us but they never minded— I have not seen Willie alone yet. I liked M^{rs} Finlayson all along & felt very sorry to part from her more particularly as she did not seem in such good spirits & I rather think she will be ill. She suffers well poor thing & was a great contrast to Miss Allan who kept up a constant grumbling till the moment she left us— She c^d not abide ducks geese or venison & these being all we c^d give her except fish she did not seem comfortable— M^{rs} Potter entertained the party at the butlers table in the same way only she was a degree worse not being able to eat either the bread or butter. I wonder at Marg^{ts} philosophy in upholding things as she did & thereby incurring hints that to a person well brought up the privations were insufferable— M^r Ross¹ was here for 9

¹Donald Ross (1797-1852) was in charge of Norway House for twenty-one years. His letters and papers were preserved by his family, and are in the Provincial Archives of British Columbia. Some extracts used here were obtained through the kindness of Mr. W. E. Ingersoll, who had the papers in his possession

days he is a very kind good natured like man and as Willie says it is an ill wind that blows nobody good, so his daughters extravagance subdued him & he was like a lamb while transacting business in the store took what he c^d get without much repining at their scarcity & valueless quality— He was very kind to me, as indeed they all are except an old horror M^r Charles¹ who growls at every one till I tremble to speak to him. He is just Miss Jane Scipio “less elegantly touched”.

You may tell M^{rs} Mactaggart with my love that I wrote to Julian from Stromness by a M^r Rae who promised to put it into her own hands & lest as he is rather a stupid like man it might miscarry I sent a letter to Red river by M^{rs} Finlayson who will assuredly forward it but not till Spring I fear. Hargrave wishes me to write M^{rs} Mactag but I wont both as the postage is a consideration² & this is the only letter I will attempt to send privately, as it is disagreeable to ask people & difficult for them to manage taking them on shore, without a telling of stories— I have written 2 M^{rs} Simpsons & M^{rs} Webster M^{rs} Loudoun Worsley Duncan Campbell Bank, Mary Hamⁿ Miss Campbell East Cliff & Miss Smith & think I have fulfilled my promises—& M^{rs} Clouston.

I have just returned from the store where I saw such a display of lace (blonde) a finger length in breadth for 2/6 here & blonde edging at 4^d & 5^d really very pretty, of course the broad is not genuine Brussels, but the price is extraordinary. The flannel is the best thing I can see. It is fine, & at the same time close & compact. There is some called Bath Coating w^{ch} is very expensive. Willie says that the poorest people here rush at the dearest flannel.

for a time; others were kindly furnished by the above Archives. For a biography of Donald Ross see Fleming, *Minutes of Council*, p. 453.

¹John Charles (1784-1866) was going on furlough by the ship preparatory to his retirement after forty-one years' service in the Company. For biography see Rich, *Robertson's letters*, pp. 207-9.

²Letitia frequently mentions the high postage rate on letters from York, which was eight times that of the penny per half ounce which obtained in Great Britain. Consequently, passengers going to England were usually given letters to post on arrival there. This custom was so general that even Governor Simpson frequently gave instructions that his letters should be sent thus. Simpson to Hargrave, July 8, 1839: “Do me the favor to collect all letters . . . and let them be smuggled ashore . . . others left sealed and taken ashore in the pockets of great coats or otherwise.”

They have so much sense— I went into the kitchen today & found Betsy¹ the washing woman busy over a tub with a Stuart tartan gown & her hair dressed for the occasion. She has charge of a family whose mother died in Spring & right in the middle of the floor stood the baby in its moss bag & cradle quite erect. Betsy lived as squaw with a M^r Randall who went home in the Autumn & whom the people in Londⁿ have put into the house there. She waited on Miss Ross & told her what she thought of M^r Randall having gone. She says she has had 4 or else 5 husbands, but she will never take another as it will only be for her money that they will ask her— Hargrave looked over her accounts & found she really has gathered £ 88. w^{ch} is in the Comp^ys hands. She makes it by washing & never spends a penny of the interest as she has her living from the kitchen & is well behaved— Her kindness to the poor baby is extraordinary. Miss Ross used to hear it squalling all night as it is teething & she soothed & sung to it as if she had been its mother— All this because when its own mother was dying she asked her to take it home & nurse it out of a sucking pipe & be good to it—

I have just got 56 y^{ds} of the gayest print to make curtains of— the carpets look well & are a good strong Kidderminster that I think will not be apt to lose colour. There are 3 windows in each room & 2 in our bedroom so that the sun cant fail to look in when it pleases as they are in all the airts & there is no way of putting on shutters as there is no *jut* in the windows from the walls being so thin. The stoves are frightful. M^{rs} Finlayson could not keep the temperature of her rooms lower than 90, had to let it out & open all the windows till the room got cold when Gibout again lighted & roasted her out. Since they went I always dine alone & in the course of a harangue from Gibout of Willies passion for shooting & walking for the indulgence of it 13 miles every foot step up to his thigh in mud Gibout informed me he had been with old M^r Mactavish in the “Service of the N West Comp^y at F^t W^m”. I almost laughed at the rueful shake he gave his head when I said I supposed that had been a better service than this. He has been here ever since Uncle came & Willie says he has always showed great affection for him. All the gentlemen speak

¹See introduction, p. xliii. Betsy later married the cooper, David Munro, for whose family she was caring.

to him in the most familiar way & the more they do so the more assiduous & respectful he becomes— His wife is dead & he has a boy of Lockies age his very image in the way of good qualities— He is so very obliging that he offered Marg^t to learn reading & she has the honor to be his governess—

A Scotchwoman at Red river who is married to a Norwegian M^{rs} Dahl hearing that I was a country woman sent a couple of huge highland looking cheeses with her kindest comp^{ts} to me. An Indian half cast lady took the same oppor^y to send 6 pairs of mocassins along with a request that we should send her tea & sugar in return— Another embroidered covers of fine scarlet cloth for the dogs that draw my carriage. Harg^{ve} paid the cloth silk & ribbons & her return is to be a merino gown made in the London fashion! I never saw Madame Fanson.¹ W^m says she is little Harg^{ve} says middle size, so you may guess how poor Marg^t is to hit on any thing like a fit. I fear it will be York fashion in spite of all our exertions.

Before M^{rs} Finlayson went she thought it would be right to call for M^{rs} Gladman partly for civility & partly because she wished that M^{rs} G. & I should be on civil terms being the only women, & she w^d not advise me to go to her first lest as they have a way of doing she might sneer & say I was glad to get her comp^y. So over M^r F & she went & she very coolly informed her that we were sorry at not seeing her, but it was not customary in Engl^d for the lady newly arrived to call for the old settler. So the very day after she left us I perceived M^r & M^{rs} Gladman coming along the platform, the lady as large as a lady can be & dressed to death in a Waterloo blue Merino, moccasins, a straw bonnet lined with lilac satin with a profusion of lilac blue & white ribbon & a cap border of very broad blonde, the same depth all round no gloves & a silk shawl, the old fashion white around & green pattern. M^r Gladman said she w^d have come sooner if she had wished to please him, but she was bashful & did not like to intrude. She is very decent looking & M^{rs} Finlayson says her daughters are quiet modest like girls. I shall return the visit tomorrow & see them— Her 1st husband the Misses Stewarts² father is still alive but she

¹Also referred to as "Miss Fansan" in letter 26.

²R. D. Stewart. See p. 82.

is now fairly married. The 2 Miss Stewarts live with them & are both past 20 & they have a very large family of Gladmans— All the half casts speak very low & I have always remarked that their voices were pleasant. M^{rs} Gladman is fully as vulgar looking as M^{rs} Loynachan but speaks well & that is a great help. I rather think she is kindly disposed & looks at any rate good natured. The poor woman must be uncomfortably situated with such a family & no servant, obliged to take what is sent her from the mess kitchen. Willie says they like nothing but animal food so that they will be pleased. As for me I am tired already & have taken to milk porridge for a change & find it very good for me as my bowels dont plague me now at all.

I wrote Mama that all the rooms were painted green. It is only however in our house as Harg^{ve} thought it good for the sight!! The bedroom is pale blue with a wainscoating color of indigo. What wth the huge black stoves & the sombre colored walls we must seem rather gloomy. How is Charlotte *Your*—Remember us to the Barrs.

I am quite baked with the stove. There are 3 windows open but Gibout has made such a fire that the thermometer is 72 & feels like a very warm green house & my eyes are smarting & inflamed— The weather continues warm thro the day but altho' the sun shines brightly it is cold in the morn^g & sharp at night. By last years journal the snow began on the 19th of this month but only in showers. There is a small plot of pease in full flourish but they never pod to any size. Indeed the blossoms look more luxuriant than at home but not above half a dozen have formed & they are as flat as a piece of paper. I take them for flowers as there is a great scarcity of such.

I suppose John Hamilton is married before this time. I daresay his sisters will be very uncomfortable at Tyret or whatever it is called. It was a great relief to me my getting Mamas letter saying you were so much better just as we were to leave M^r Cloustons— I had not time to write a line so just mentioned on the envelope that it had arrived. While there Hargrave tried to get a small keg of salt herrings but could not, so he now desires me to ask papa if he could get a very few sent to London next ship time. There are 2 ships building, they are much smaller than the present one & will leave London I suppose much at the same

time. We were at least a week later this season & there was little to detain us at Stromness where we only remained a week, while they often are 3 there is such difficulty getting the serv^{ts} to come on board. Did I tell you that I am getting a Tuscan bonnet from Orkney—they plait beautifully & sent a bonnet to the Queen. The straw for mine is to be sent to Edin^h & M^{rs} Clouston is to manage the transaction. I do not remember any thing further— We saw 2 unfortunate white bears on ice bergs. They had a very desolate appearance & looked especially the 1st we saw as if it w^d have eat the ship.

Willie & Harg^{ve} join me in best love to all at home & believe me my d^r Polly

Y^r ev^r aff sister

L-H

Y^u never saw the like of W^m for speaking or rather hearing. He says there is nothing he likes so well as a little jocular^y & if there is merriment in the Fac^y it is in the clerks Hall as I hear their laughter wherever I go. The playing upon a [illegible] w^d make y^u melancholy were it not for the ludicrous style in w^{ch} the pieces are performed. They are all very [illegible] M^r Lane¹ & D^r Gillespie are regular gentlemen. The latter [illegible] in his looks he is very clever has performed good cures already & is going to operate in a case of cataract.

Lockhart offered to write me a letter tell him to do it, & Alex^r too. I hope they are quite strong again & that Hec^r improves in farming & has got well as he was complaining when I heard. Give

¹Richard Lane (1816-1877), entered the Company's service at Red River in 1838. He served at York in 1839-41, and then again at Red River in 1841-5. He was posted to the Columbia Department in 1845, and travelled there with the Warre-Vavasour party. In 1846 he brought out the Fort Vancouver District papers; and at Red River he married Mary, eldest of Andrew McDermot's nine daughters, who returned to the Columbia with him. On her death in 1851 he sent their son and daughter to Andrew McDermot, who reared them. The daughter married Alexander Logan, four times mayor of early Winnipeg, where she is recalled as a charming "first lady" of pioneer days. Lane retired from the Company in 1851, but took an agency for them at Champoege, of which he was relieved in 1852 (Ballenden's letter-book, 1850-54). For biography see E. E. Rich (ed.), *McLoughlin's Fort Vancouver letters, third series* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1944), p. 314.

76 LETTERS OF LETITIA HARGRAVE

my love to them all & be sure & have y^r letter in time for I will be in a fright till I see them. Address under cover to W^m Smith Es[q] Sec^y Hud^{ns} B. H^o

25. TO DUGALD MACTAVISH, SENIOR

York Factory 2nd September 1840

My dear papa

I have left your letter to the last and as I dont know how soon the packet may be sealed, and it is not likely that I shall find any thing further to mention, it is as well for me to get it ready. The weather has been so bad that I have only been once beyond the pickets since I landed so that I have seen very little & the only thing worthy of any admiration was the powder magazine built by Gibout. The stones were all brought from Churchill in Schooners— It is plastered with lime on the sides & back, but in front which looks to the river it is elegantly finished in the way they do at home, like our drawing room, or rather like old M^{rs} Smith's. We looked into some tents which were very miserable & comfortless like. Altho they were small there were two families in each. One woman had large gold earrings w^{ch} were put half way up her ears & stuck out a good deal, & a beautiful turquoise ring. She wore a green tartan gown mocassins & blanket. The other women had all 3 or 4 large glass bead necklaces—different colours— They never wear caps but on wet or cold days, they tie blue printed handkerchiefs over their heads— It is so swampy here that there are drains made of wood all under the Factory & a good way beyond & down to the river. The garden is underlaid with willows, but there is nothing in it but turnips & lettuces w^{ch} last are put into broth & mashed in imitation of spinage. They are very bitter & I w^d like the broth best without them—

On our arrival we found a letter from Uncle John the substance of w^{ch} Hargrave has already given you— He says he is sorry that we did not go by Canada but if he lives a few years longer that we may meet again. It is likely from that, he thinks we may go where he is now. He attributes his ignorance of what is going on at home to both he & you being bad correspondents— I found a letter Dug^d had left for me here & had also one from him dated

at Norway House on his way down. He had just received the box with the shirts at that place & commissioned me to thank Mama & you for them— M^r Manson a Chief trader from Vancouver came across the Mountains with Dugald & says he had got a kick from his horse & that a servant going to catch the animal had been severely hurt on the side immediately after. Dug^d was a little lame for several weeks but had got perfectly well before he left York.

We have been plagued with people for the last 10 days—the voyageurs from Red river & MacKenzie river. The fort behind us was surrounded with tents & we had neither rest day nor night for some time, for they shouted & screamed till I was tired hearing them. Among the gentlemen here are M^r Charles the oldest Factor in the service, M^r Mac Pherson¹ who has been 24 years at a remote post at MacKenzies river without leaving it M^r Ross, & M^r Dease² who has returned from the Arctic expedition. I like him much better than any of them, he looks like a gentleman & is pleasing in every respect. M^r Charles, Mac Pherson, & he dined here on Friday. M^r Mac Pherson seemed a good deal puzzled with what he saw & heard especially how the others managed to eat their fish without a knife. He copied them carefully even to holding a piece of bread right over his fish but never found out the use of doing so altho he looked & watched very attentively— Except M^r Ross they are all to return to England by the ship. M^r Thomas Simpson³ is in London before this time. Dease &

¹Murdoch McPherson (1796-1863), entered the North West Company in 1816, and became a chief trader in the Hudson's Bay Company in 1834, and a chief factor in 1847. He was in the Mackenzie River District from 1823 to 1848, except for a furlough in 1840-3. He retired in 1851 to a fine property at Pictou, Nova Scotia, left him by his father-in-law, Chief Factor Edward Smith. See introduction, p. xliii. For biography, see Wallace, *Documents relating to the North West Company*, p. 483.

²Peter Warren Dease (1788-1863) was at York on his way to England on furlough, after commanding the Northern Discovery Expedition of 1836-9, in association with Thomas Simpson. He was a son of Dr. John Dease of Montreal, nephew of Sir William Johnson, and was named after his grand-uncle, Sir Peter Warren, the captor of Louisbourg in 1745. For biography see *ibid.*, p. 436.

³After the Northern Discovery Expedition of 1836-9, Simpson had returned to Red River on February 2, 1840. On June 6, he had proceeded over the plains to the south on his way to England. See introduction, p. xlv. For biography see Fleming, *Minutes of Council*, pp. 455-6.

he have got a pension of £100 per an & expect the offer of knight-hood w^{ch} diverts the people here as they say M^{rs} Dease¹ is a very black squaw & will be a curious lady. He is a Canadian, his ancestors having been American royalists who left the States during the disturbances there—

The little hams we brought from home look well & have kept perfectly, but we will not use them till the Holidays— On arriving at Liverpool we found that one of the marmalade jars had broken, so I opened the box got a new jar, scraped the box & got it all gathered & packed so that it reached this with scarcely any loss— It was the thick kind not the jelly & it was only the bottom that came out of the dish so that the pot looked full when first examined.

Uncle Johns servant George² came up with M^r Ross, he looks very much older than he did & is now settled at Red river where he had got a good deal of property, but his wife last year made him sell upwards of £100 worth for £40, so that he is a good deal impoverished & had to take a place as summer serv^t from M^r Ross— I have seen 2 of the most distinguished voyageurs. They were dressed in sky blue capots scarlet sashes & high scarlet night caps & mocassins— L'Esperance³ was a Canadian the other a half cast but there was little difference in their colour they have been so much exposed.

¹Peter Warren Dease married Elizabeth Chouinard on August 3, 1840 (H.B.C. Arch., E. 3/1, Red River Register of Marriages). She had accompanied him during 1938-39 on the Northern Discovery Expedition.

²This was George Thorne, who had been John George McTavish's personal servant in the North West Company, and had accompanied him to England when he was sent there in 1819-20 for trial because of his part in the Selkirk troubles. He went with McTavish into the Hudson's Bay Company, and served as butler at York Factory from 1821-34, when, his health being affected, he was posted to Fort Garry in the same capacity. He retired about 1838 to the White Horse Plain, Red River Settlement. He had wished to continue under McTavish after the latter was posted to Moose Factory in 1830, but McTavish did not think this advisable.

³Alexis L'Esperance was a famous guide who commanded the most noted brigade in the country, that of Portage la Loche (see L. A. Prud'homme, *Voyageurs canadiens-français et Métis, 1763-1870* (Montreal, 1904), p. 47; John Peter Turner, "The La Loche Brigade" (*The Beaver*, December, 1943, pp. 32-6). For a detailed account of an actual trip of this brigade from York Factory to Red River under L'Esperance, see Ballantyne, *Hudson's Bay*, 2nd ed., pp. 71-87. The second *voyageur* mentioned by Letitia may have been Baptiste Bruce, who shortly after this was officially appointed second under L'Esperance.

There are 2 young buffaloes feeding before our house previous to being sent home, & the men used to gather round & stare at them some of them w^d raise his arms & take mark as if with a gun. The animals are tame & will eat salt out of the hand. A red common calf of their own age came as soon as they arrived & has never since left them night or day. We found that they had killed all the pigs except one black brute, it was by Nicol Finlaysons orders as he said they were more trouble than they were all worth. There are only 3 milk cows who wander about in the woods with bells round their necks— We have got ten sheep sent from Red river with some potatoes & a bag of onions. All the sheep will be killed as soon as the weather is cold enough to freeze them. The ladies had one killed for provisions on their voyage & Capⁿ Herd will get another for the ship when it goes. There never was a whole sheep here before within the memory of man tho M^r Ross has sent a part of one— They have a constant supply of fish from the river. I think the white fish here are better than our turbout. Certainly there are individuals among them that are much firmer & better in every way & as far as I can judge the average quality is equal & this is not the best season. They have salmon trout but they appear to me to be richer than the old fish at home so much so that I dont like them fresh. Very large ones are pickled & sent from Oxford House. I mean preserved like potted herrings— They are very fond of the Boss of the buffaloe but I think it like a very bad hard tongue. It is cured in the same way as the tongue. They get very imperfectly cured beef from Red river but beautiful pork & tripe from England for our Mess— They are almost quite fresh & require salt.

M^r Webster gave us a large setter I dont know why. It suffered dreadfully from sea sickness in the ship & on the guns being fired ran for security into a barrel of hot tar & lost most part of her skin. She was terrified for the Husky dogs at first but is now quite familiarized to them & their habits. When the factory bell is rung which is always 6 times a day, but on particular days still more frequently—they all begin howling while the noise continues— There will soon be 40, but at present the party round the bell is not so large. The Indians keep one foot tied up to their neck lest they chase any one as they are very fierce & wolfish looking.

I dont think you know that M^r Webster is descendent &

representative of Claverhouse & might now be indisputably Viscount or Earl Dundee but he has not fortune for it as he spent a great deal before his marriage. They have a good estate in Scotland still besides that at West Ham & he is a sick man. M^r James Graham whom you saw there is his son— He had always lived with them till 2 years ago when M^{rs} Webster got him out after a diplomacy of 14 years, as they don't like each other but his father w^d not send him away till she fairly got the better of him. She is now manoeuvring to get rid of John the old servant who has ruled the house for 30 years & had made great progress when I was there having herself told him she would provide herself with another servant in Nov^r & advised him to take to some trade that he was acquainted with.

Hargrave and Willie unite with me in kindest love to you Mama and all the others— Believe me my dear papa

Your most affect^{te} daughter

LETITIA HARGRAVE

On arriving here M^r Finlayson acquainted M^r Hargrave that his hopes for advancement this year were at an end. Uncle John the Governor M^r Finlayson and all his friends as far as I can learn supported him at the meeting of Council in this country. But the Committee in London decided on making a poor clerk into a trader in place of a trader into a Factor and I think it was quite fair as they say the poor man had been long toiling. Hargrave was a good deal cast down for the rest of the day after hearing, but he never spoke of it afterwards. M^r Ross was promoted last year. He was much alarmed & dispirited by the heavy accounts Miss Ross brought upon him.¹ He said both to Finlayson & Hargrave that it would embarrass him before they were settled. One of them amounted to £85 for dresses, another for a shawl satinet gown lace mits embroidered with gold of £20—and many others— He says that her residence of 2 years & a half in London has cost him £500— Her board at school was £30 – & she only studied the ordinary branches, not the piano, which was the principal thing he had in view when he sent her. So she took the alarm 3 months before she left school paid 10 guineas for a guitar

¹See introduction, p. xxxv.

& a music stand for it which w^d have looked showy in the first drawing room & began to practise singing, & even herself admits that she cannot. I did not hear her sing but Hargrave said it was shocking. M^{rs} Ross is extravagant or rather like M^{rs} Mac-taggart if I may judge from the absurd quantities of absurd things she sent for from this. She Miss Ross, had boots & glazed shoes innumerable but not a pair she [illegible] c^d be supplied at the store. Even at Stromness the streets were so dirty that she had to borrow a pair of mine. I pitied poor Miss Allan very much. She plagued me more than any of them as I never c^d treat her as M^{rs} F. & Miss Ross did, so that when she came to leave this [place] she was convulsed with distress & I daresay did not anticipate much attention or kindness where she is going— She even wore out Hargrave's civility, she was so tiresome & queer. I never went on deck that she did not pursue me & he scarcely ever could get a word spoken for her— Miss Ross was impertinent to her & M^{rs} Finⁿ treated her with great coldness & stiffness altho she never of course deliberately insulted her w^{ch} Miss Ross was constantly doing— She Miss R, was anxious to spend the Winter here but I told M^{rs} F. who informed her that it was likely her mother w^d wish her company more than I could do. She then wished to go with her to Red river, but she told her husband on no account to permit her.

26. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

York Factory 1st Decemb^r 1840

My dear Mama

There is an express going off to Moose¹ & Harg^{ve} says he will get this forwarded to the Yankee post & he expects that it will reach you in May or early in June. I have nothing particular to say. We have all been well, Willie particularly so. Harg^{ve} caught

¹The Company avoided the high postal rates by having their own officers carry the express packets. This was the last time that the official winter express was sent *via* Moose Factory to Sault Ste. Marie. Thereafter letters and official papers were sent to Fort Garry in time to be forwarded by the winter packet from Red River to the Sault, about January 20. Letitia and Hargrave often reported all hands at York busy writing during the first week of December at the latest, to catch this Red River express.

cold & had a violent attack of rheumatism he is greatly better indeed I suspect it is gone as he never speaks of it but when I ask & he made a tremendous disturbance when very bad. I hope the Capⁿ forwarded my letters to Polly & Flo. I was sorry I did not say I had written as they w^d wonder if they did not receive them— We had a very tedious time of alternate frost & thaw so that I was long kept in the house. Now however I drive out every day between 7 or 8 miles in a carriage & 3 dogs. I have not felt cold tho' the glass is generally below zero at night— While out the musk ox robe over me is covered near my mouth with hoar frost & Gibout's whiskers & eye brows are white, but I feel warm.

M^{rs} Gladman & I are getting very gracious— She favoured me with her history & that of her mother before her. Her father was partner in the other Co^y.¹ Her mother, his wife as she considered herself got a girl in to help her to work who prevailed on her father to take her too, so the first got indignant & left him. The children were grown up & had left them so she went & lived with M^r Gladman's mother widow of one in the same Co^y.² The father went to England & died, the 2nd squaw having died before him. I wish I c^d tell it as M^{rs} Gladman did. Her mother suffered so much that she had to be bled on the occasion— Her own story was as disastrous. M^r Stewart³ a man who had established steam mills for sawing timber at Moose & who was employed by the Co^y asked her father for her when she was 12 years old. She was dragged out of her mothers room & sent away with him. She declares that she never hated man as she did him, & he beat & maltreated her till life was a burden. When she had been married 6 years she had a daughter & then other 2 children. After living with him 9 years he left her & the children & went to Canada where he has been ever since. She waited 4 years & then "I went with M^r Gladman". She always says "When I

¹By this Letitia means the Hudson's Bay Company before the Union. Mrs. Gladman's father was Thomas Vincent, Governor of Moose Factory in 1814.

²Mrs. Vincent and Mrs. Gladman, "... without flattery two of the most respectable Ladies I have met in this land,"... were visited by Hargrave at Moose Factory on his way to England in 1837. See also David Anderson, *The net in the bay* (London, 1873), p. 115.

³See Fleming, *Minutes of Council*, p. 332.

was sent with M^r Stewart" & "When I *went* with M^r Gladman"—She was fairly married 3 years ago & sports a wedding ring. Her two daughters live with them but she sent the boy to his father. There are 6 little Gladmans. Hargraves representatives at Oxford¹ & Churchill² both wish Miss Stewart to marry them, but her mother declares she will take neither. They are both partners & are coming here at Xmas. They are very weariful misses & look like death.

Marg^t has discarded poor Betsy & washes herself now in a large room of the house in w^{ch} M^{rs} G. lives. They all congregate about her & seem delighted with her society displaying all their grandeur. When M^{rs} G— brings baby here he is dressed with a pink gauze cap cased with blue ribbons & a broad plaiting of blond lace, not vulgar edging but the whole breadth in one piece. From what she says the ladies in this country have a fashion of smothering their babies— M^{rs} Charles³ killed one while her husband was in England many years ago & poor woman has never got the better of the horror. One of Uncle John's squaws⁴ sister to M^r Christies wife & daughter of the Gov^r at Moose (near where Uncle had a post in opposition) had a son who was found smothered between them one morn^g. She said Uncle had done it, he said twas her. However he went home before the next baby was born & when he got to Canada he heard she had smothered it too so he told her she might get another husband as he w^d not go near her. Her father cast her off so she married a cooper & she now lives near Uncle at Lake of 2 Mountains. This of course was before he came home 1st. When last in London he had his youngest daughter⁵ with him 9 years old. She went about with him to

¹Chief Trader Richard Grant was in charge at Oxford House in 1837-41. His wife, Mary Ann Berland, had died in 1834. See Fleming, *Minutes of Council*, p. 442.

²This was Robert F. Harding, who was born about 1801, and entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1819. He served in the Swan River District, 1819 to 1821, and at Churchill from 1821 to 1845, when he retired. After 1826 he had been clerk in charge of the post. Though Hargrave valued his services highly he was unable to effect his promotion.

³John Charles married Jane Auld, probably the daughter of William Auld, superintendent of Northern Factories, with whom he was associated when he first entered the Company's service in 1799.

⁴See letter 22.

⁵Anne, daughter of Nancy McKenzie.

large dinner shines. M^{rs} Simpson said he spoiled her & she would not let him out of her sight. When he was leaving this (York) she was playing at the river side so he told Harg^{ve} to get her into the boat with him. Her mother was standing at a little distance half distressed & half sulky for she knew she w^d not see him again. Harg^{ve} lifted Miss Anne into the boat & off they rowed. The poor woman had 5 children after that & escaped herself from the upsetting of a canoe when they & their father were all drowned.¹ Dugald told Willie that all his cousins were equal to any white in every respect. The names of the last family are Mary Flora Marg^t & Anne, who was sent to Moose by the 1st ship as she lost her health in Londⁿ. Poor M^{rs} Mactavish had 4 of them but Mary & Flora are married now. The state of society seems shocking. Some people educate & make gentlemen of part of their family & leave the other savages. I had heard of M^r Bird² at Red river & his dandified sons. One day while the boats were here a common half breed came in to get orders for provisions for his boatmen. M^r H. called him M^r Bird³ to my amazement. This was one who had not been educated & while his father & brothers are Nobility at the Colony, he is a voyageur & sat at table with the house servants here. D^r MacLoughlen,⁴ one of our grantees at a great expense gave 2 of his sons a regular education in England & keeps the 3rd a common Indian.⁵ One of them had been for years at the Military College in Lonⁿ but they have both entered the Coy^s Service— I daresay the heathen is the happiest of them as the father is constantly upbraiding the others with the ransom they have cost him— He is Dugalds master who likes him.

M^r Evans the Wesleyan is very anxious to settle here instead

¹See letter 13.

²James Bird (1773-1856), a retired chief factor. His home, "Marchmont," at Red River, was one of the finest in the Settlement. The site of Bird's Hill, Manitoba, on the Canadian Pacific Railway, eight miles from Winnipeg, was originally his property. For biography, see Rich, *Simpson's Athabasca journal*, p. 429.

³Joseph Bird.

⁴Chief Factor John McLoughlin (1784-1857), who was in charge of the Columbia Department. See the three volumes of the *McLoughlin letters*.

⁵Joseph McLoughlin. See Rich, *McLoughlin letters, first series*, p. 350.

of Norway H^e. He has a Canadian wife & one daughter of 17ⁱ who is either to go to Red River or Eng^d this next year. I w^d rather for my part have a minister without encumbrance as the meals of the family are cooked here & sent from this, & y^u may imagine what roasting at a wooden fire & no grate it takes for the Gladman family. Gibout's heart is broken at the provisions they run thro'. He says "dey eat like tigers." The Governor complains too, of keeping the Stewarts, but Harg^{ve} says there is a prodigious difference in the consumption since Crosbie, as he was very lavish & M^{rs} Gladman complains to Marg^t of the style of her table—When Uncle was here M^{rs} Ross² & M^{rs} Miles³ got their rations the same as the common people & might either cook themselves or eat raw if they preferred it. But an Indian is kept for M^r Gladmans attendant a drone of a man called Igniabitum and all that he does here is to bake on Sund^y morn^g & Wed^y even^g. M^{rs} G. says her husband has a notion that they are going to send him across the Mountains. He must go the 1st year but will give in his resignation & retire next as he thinks it cruel to make him with such a family take a journey of the kind. They will all leave us in summer but he starts for Red River in Feb^y, I w^d rather have no woman at all than one I was not quite intimate with & I know I w^d never get on with a Wesleyan. M^{rs} G— poor woman does not trouble me as she never comes unless she hears there is something the matter & no one can be kinder or apparently more anxious. M^{rs} Finlayson used to lecture me & tell me what to do & not to do—I daresay she thought me indifferent for my mind was running a good deal on Lady Flo Hastings⁴ so in despair

¹James Evans married Mary Blithe Smith, of L'Original, Lower Canada. The daughter was Clarissa.

²Donald Ross was stationed at York under John George McTavish in 1824-6. He had married, about 1821, Mary, daughter of Alexander McBeth, a member of the Selkirk settler party of 1815. Hargrave to Letitia Mactavish, May 27, 1838: "She [Mrs. Donald Ross] speaks several of the Indian languages & is a tender mother & careful wife, happy and contented."

³Robert Seaborn Miles was at York in 1824-34. His wife was Elizabeth (Betsy), daughter of William Sinclair, senior. Previous to her marriage to Miles, she was the mother of George Simpson's daughter Maria, whom she and Miles reared. See Rich, *McLoughlin letters, second series*, p. 103, n. 4.

⁴Lady Flora Hastings, Lady of the Bedchamber to the Duchess of Kent, was wrongfully accused in a Court scandal, and died shortly afterwards, in July, 1839.

she spoke to Harg^{ve} & M^{rs} Gladⁿ. They had brought M^{rs} Simpson to the verge of the grave the way she had been treated keeping her on bread & milk, & the D^r¹ who took care of her having never practised but in a ship, mismanaged her fearfully—

I must tell y^u of our Mess. M^r Gladman & Willie sit next me, on Willies side are the D^r² & M^r Lane, on M^r G^s, M^r Philpin³ & M^r Wilson.⁴ The D^r is a white headed Goliath who eats in the most alarming manner I mean as to quantity for he is a gentleman. Willie says he never saw one discuss pemmican like him. They are great friends & spend Wed^y walking from 8 a.m. till 7 at night. He is very tall & uncouth looking. M^r Lane is the size of D^r Harvey. He is very recherché & good natured & w^d do any thing to oblige any one. M^r Philpin commands the fleet here in summer & writes in Winter. He is a Welshman upwards of 30 extremely round & fat. He came as Chief Mate on board a ship w^{ch} the Capⁿ ran on shore damaging cargo &c. Philpin was indignant & to prove that it was from no ignorance of his but the obstinacy of the Capⁿ he offered to engage for 3 years. Y^u may believe this is a poor affair but he has distinguished himself & they say the Co^y will give him a ship. He was newly married & has not seen his wife [since]. He will go home next ship time. Last is M^r Wilson who trades with the Indians & has charge of all the workmen. He is the Butt of the party being an Orkney man who came here as a boat carpenter but was promoted no one knows why for he is an ass. All energy, never saying or doing right & yet very

¹Probably Dr. Hendry, who was the Company's surgeon at Fort Garry when Governor and Mrs. Simpson's first child, George Geddes Simpson, was born. Simpson described him as "... a very 'Rum' fellow of a Dr.; the strangest compound of skill, simplicity, selfishness, extravagance, musical taste and want of Courtesy I ever fell in with." (Simpson to Hargrave, Red River Settlement, December 19, 1831).

²W. D. Gillespie.

³W. B. Philpin arrived at York in 1838 and was appointed sloop master there in 1839.

⁴Robert Wilson of Stromness, born about 1800, entered the Company's service as a boatbuilder in 1820. He was at Norway House and in the Saskatchewan and Swan River Districts until 1834, when he was appointed to the charge of Severn House. In 1839 he was made a post master at York, in charge of the workmen. He was promoted to the rank of clerk in 1849, and in 1854 he took charge at Oxford House. In 1863 he became assistant there to Chief Trader C. J. Griffin, and died on March 29, 1864.

willing. He lives in the gent^s house & altho' each has a different nickname for him he is constantly working for one or other. He never opens his mouth at table that there is not a burst of laughing on all sides, he looks bewildered sometimes but generally joins at last. M^{rs} Gladⁿ used to join the mess here as M^{rs} Nicol Finlayson¹ did not like to be without female support & W^m says it was dreadful as they thought they were laughing at them & on one occasion M^{rs} G. rose & waddled out of the room. She has a great look of old nurse Fleming & seems to have a decided turn for her profession, as she nursed the Coopers baby whose mother (Indian) died, along with her own. It is common here for women who never had children to have milk. It is a fact that Betsy has enough for that child. M^{rs} G. being ill & her own child growing she told Betsy to try & she w^d soon have enough as she had often seen it. So Betsy nurses away without troubling M^{rs} G— The people in the Fort who have children get a little milk but as we have only 3 cows it cant be much. They have no vegetables but dried pease. Marg^t says they either give babies nothing but milk or else present them with the leg of a goose. M^{rs} Gladⁿ like the rest never makes porridge breadberry or sago w^{ch} abounds. The children all drink tea & except one of them they look very like it as they are poor like objects. They hated Miss Mary Taylor, or M^{rs} Stewart, who had a room in their house last Winter & who intimated that the Gov^r made her remain at York that M^r Wilson might marry her. M^r W. either had too much pluck or too little sense but M^{rs} Stewart intimated to M^{rs} N. Finlayson that M^r Lane had popped. I attacked Willie & he said very reluctantly that M^{rs} S. had told D^r Cowie & from the way she had spoken & detailed the affair he thought it was true as a half breed could never have devised such a Frenchified speech as she attributed to M^r Lane. She refused him. She is past 30 he considerably younger than W^m who says she is an awful monster of a black woman loaded with jewelry. She had silver spoons and forks I dont know where she wore them. She was very unwilling to leave York this winter but Duncan Finlayson sent her off with his

¹Mrs. Finlayson was at York when her husband was in charge there during Hargrave's absence in 1839-40. She was the daughter of Chief Factor Alexander Kennedy, and was married to Nicol Finlayson at Moose Factory, by Governor Simpson, on August 10, 1829.

brother before we came. M^r Wilson had met with a disappointment from a Miss Fanson. He & another man asked her from the master of the Fort where she lived. He told Wilson that if he finished a boat by Spring he c^d have her. The other man was a house carpenter & he promised her to him if a house was finished by a certain time. In the meantime he went off on a voyage & was so delighted by the canoe navigation of a M^r M^cShay that when he got home he made her marry *him*. She has embroidered 4 dog saddle cloths for me in a most elaborate fashion so Harg^{ve} told her husband that I w^d get a beautiful French merino gown made English fashion for her. So the unhappy man lost the gown [sent as a pattern] & we have no idea of her size. Harg^{ve} says she is the height of one woman & the breadth of another, so the gown was made shorter than my satin one but the same size otherwise. Marg^t is a great dressmaker has been with Madame Cerclaron or Cercle for 6 months. She was 2^{ce} with the Gillons 1st to wait on the Misses & next as nursery maid for w^{ch} she left Madames. She continues perfectly satisfactory & seems quite contented. She has done an immense deal of work in the sewing way making curtains for beds & windows carpets & sheets as well as my Winter gown & duffle drawers & other body clothes [and] a hassock stuffed wth feathers & covered with carpet.

I have got a French wardrobe painted green with black feet & a broad stripe of palest yellow— This is the uniform of the house. My own & H^s chests of drawers his wardrobe 2 book cases night table the very screen for holding towels & drying cloths with the large tin dishes on the stoves are all green black & palest yellow— Two large mirrors are the last & look M^r Wilson says, very fine. The most of this is all new— The basin stands & bed are brown but [how] long they will remain so I cant tell. There are 3 small windows in the drawing room. I have got from the store 6 curtain pins for them w^{ch} look like so many sun flowers magnified. They are larger than any I ever saw before but they are the smallest that will go down at Red River. For some lady there they had been destined when we seized them— The Huskie dogs stare in amazement when they see the dark carpet & other things, but an Indian who came in the other day to speak to Harg^{ve} never cast his eyes upon an article altho' he c^d never have seen a carpet or sunflowers or large curtains either.

When I go out all the whites stand & stare especially in the carriage & M^{rs} Croisdens children cheer loudly altho' they have never been home, but the Indians either turn their back or walk away.

The gentⁿ were going to give a young hunter some rum as a reward for some thing he had done. His father was with them & desired they w^d not give his boy rum, adding *I'm* a good *good* old man. So they asked him to take it himself & had the pleasure of seeing him mortal [drunk] giving vent to his goodness by shouting in imitation of every beast of the forest. The good old man is very knowing having found out that scarcity enhances value. In place of bringing a large stock of fish here, he heaped them up in ice & disinterred 20 every week w^{ch} he doled out all winter before he was found out. Of course he made money out [of] the device.

I wish y^u c^d see an ox with an Orkneyman driving they seem as if they were made for each other. The Canadians work with dogs & run before the sledge like lamplighters but the oxen & orkneymen are solid looking. I sh^d have told y^u that all the tables and sofa are covered with green & that Harg^{ves} large desk [and] my piano are so likewise while the beds wear green blankets—The glass is 16 below zero & I am writing with the curtains drawn the sun is so dazzlingly bright. I didnt mean that all the blankets are green only the upper one. The rest are beautiful Yorkshire.

I have never adventured forth on snow shoes. Indeed walking through the deep snow wearied me so soon that I have given it up, I find the jolting of the carriage much better for me—The last time I walked I had pains in my limbs with dragging thro' the snow & I was sure of having M^{rs} Mactaggarts curious leg with the veins all started. Since that I have resisted— The D^r thinks me in a very good state & has even let me give up taking quinine, w^{ch} I have done ever since we left Londⁿ till 3 weeks ago—At times I feel as well as I ever did but I am often very uncomfortable. I have only been in bed 2 days since the ship sailed & that was with a cold in my head w^{ch} I got by opening the windows & staying in the room in spite of all I heard to the contrary. I have paid for it as when I got up the windows were cau[l]ked up & not a breath ever finds its way in but by the door— While the stove rages I am clothed in flannel from the neck down to

the wrist & ankle, wearing a man's flannel jacket (knitted) drawers to my feet made of bath coating duffle socks & English stock^{gs} under mocassins & a merino gown the body lined with the said bath coating. M^r Mactaggart w^d be worse than when I wore muslin ones if he saw me with a pair of dark blue cloth leggings w^{ch} the women here tie round their waists as we used to have our stock^{gs} when little, but I button mine to my drawers w^{ch} they dont wear. Mine are embroidered with crimson pink white [and] black ribbons but theirs have beads w^{ch} look much better & dont fade as mine do. I hope your tippet reached yⁿ safely & pleased you, above all that they did not send yⁿ the account—I say this because I am not clear about the Hudsons Bay House people as Hargrave maintains that the grey fox had been changed & it must have been there, & Roberts who got y^r skin is son to the accountant in the House. Hargrave desired him to pay his son whenever he presented his account as he c^d not tell him what it w^d be till finished.

The D^r shoots partridges, Willie fishes, his arms are gigantic & he attributes it entirely to his exertions in digging holes every day in the ice to set his lines. He seems mad for it. M^r Lane trudges out 2ce a week to North river where he has traps laid for foxes. It is 5 miles off & not a fox has he caught. When they are trapped he must take them to the store where the tariff for the finest black fox is three feet of tobacco or its equivalent to the value of 5 shillings— If he wishes to buy it back on the spot it w^d be 25 guineas. Every animal they shoot or catch must be taken to the store. Willie seems to have got disgusted & merely shoots a squirrel or fox if it comes in his way as he says it is intolerable the cold to be endured while setting the iron traps. I have made him a large boa & fur mits to wear in his operations on the ice— He is a great whist player & ponders well on every card— He is very active & strong comes home (while Harg^{ve} is dressing himself by candle light) covered with hoar frost & snow from a walk before breakfast— They all I mean the clerks seem very happy among themselves *all* hating poor M^r Gladman & avowedly not knowing why or wherefore.

Willie says he has nothing to say as I offered him a piece of my letter—

We have killed our ten sheep weighing 520 lbs. & an ox 750—

The sheep were very small & genteel having all resolved themselves into tripe & liver. My poor friend the lively black pig was likewise killed but I had nothing to do with him as he is reserved for the men who get fresh rations at Xmas so I dont know his weight but he had fattened himself most effectually without the slightest aid from mortal man. M^r Wilson says the people objected last year to the pork that was given. H. asked why, & he said I suppose it was just some idea they had agst it. He is the very image of Miss Harriett Loudoun, both face figure & manner only his eyes are rather whitish. His pose & affectation atone for the difference & the conceit he has of himself.

This is my last letter at present & H wants to close his parcel for it. I have written M^{rs} Loudⁿ & M^{rs} Duncan at his desire. Also Dug^d M^{rs} Finlayson Miss Ross & Miss Allan— I dont think I told y^u that the latters grandfather was a tenant of Brodies & knew M^{rs} Macalaster in her youth. She is not genteel. I patronized her because Harg^{ve} abhorred [her] for she told me I had some unaccountable inward malady with w^{ch} she was well acquainted & w^{ch} never left a person. The poor woman meant no harm but he was exasperated & when he c^d not get me to join in neglecting the poor old sinner, he stirred up M^{rs} Finⁿ who was quite willing. I never saw a woman make herself so disagreeable. She had a fight every day with some one from the Capⁿ to M^r Thomas, she was always at war. Of course M^{rs} F. did not quarrel but Miss Ross & Harg^{ve} were eternally wrangling with her—

When I began about the tippet I meant to say it w^d be of no use to me as I have never had on my own since I came on shore— Nothing but a complete robe & boa is of use. Even a muff cant be worn, mits lined with fur being much better. I hated my otter skin cap at 1st but now am quite reconciled to it. It comes down to my very eyes— The Gladmans have not a scrap of fur about them all cloth caps & never saw a boa, but thought mine a device of my own—

I hope papas fingers dont plague him & that every one is well. I shall write again in Feb^y by M^r Gladman. Y^u will have my letter in Sep very early— I have little more paper so will finish by saying that I dont think my crisis will be before the end of March. I have been sensible for the last fortnight of a sensation as if there were a goose ducking itself. It may have been before that but I

did not observe it. M^{rs} Webster urged me to take some raw material she said she w^d never propose that they sh^d be made, so she recommended my getting a sort of pale blue jean for frocks a little fine flannel & muslin w^{ch} I have, & plenty of other things can be had here. Poor M^{rs} Simpson blamed herself for having dressed her baby¹ in white in the English way frocks made out of nainsook &c. . . . It died of inflammation of the lungs.

I hope Polly has got quite well again & that Lockie & Alex^r suffered no bad effects from their fever. Harg^{ve} is constantly speaking of Hec^r & hoping he will study. I have not had courage to tell W^m of the Gov^{rs} promise. He runs down the Columbia scheme & grumbles about his good £40 getting no interest. I have not room this letter to tell y^u an instance of the Gov^{rs} knowingness w^{ch} makes me feel he w^d not have let Harg^{ve} throw money away on a dubious security without telling him & of course H^{ve} w^d not advise W^m or any one else to do so either so I feel that there can be no immediate danger.

Harg^{ve} wishes to be remembered to the Harveys & D^r. I suppose poor Duncan is dead. I wonder what Mary will do. If Miss Mary White & Carlyle ask for me as they did for W^m & Dug^d will y^u remember me especially to them & Lilly also Miss Smith & mother Kildallings Fags & Scipio Flemings. I like York even better than at 1st as the marshes being frozen I can go out into the woods. I will have many a weary day or rather night before I hear from y^u. All I can say is not to be anxious about me. Harg^{ve} & Willie join me in kindest love to papa & y^u also Polly Flo & the boys. I am always dreaming of Alex^r.

I am ever my dear Mama y^r m^o affect^{te} dau^r

LETITIA HARGRAVE

Will y^u give my love to M^r & M^{rs} Worsley & Cecilia. I did not write her as it was needless to make her pay postage for nothing. I suppose Rob^t Hamilton is married & separated by this time—There is a tinsmith here from Campⁿ who informed W^m that he is cousin to Jⁿ Beith. His name is the same. He has a Campⁿ look about him.

¹See letter 13.

27. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

York Factory 20th Feb. '41

My dear Mama

. . . . When the packet arrived from Red River it threw us all into horror and consternation by intelligence of poor Tom Simpson's fate.¹ No one that I have heard speak except Hargrave² believes the deposition of the witnesses that he deliberately shot two men at once and when the other two of his party left him that he passed the night walking up and down before the bodies and on their return shot himself. M^r Finlayson writes that he concludes he was insane and expresses no doubt, but others say there must have been a quarrel, particularly as there was an old grudge between the Red River half-breeds and him.³ I daresay his head was a little turned as he evidently imagined from his letters that he had done what no one had performed before⁴ and expected great applause and notice in London where he expected to be on

¹See Vilhjalmur Stefansson, *Unsolved mysteries of the Arctic* (New York, 1939): "The strange fate of Thomas Simpson," pp. 130-91; Douglas MacKay and W. Kaye Lamb, "More light on Thomas Simpson" (*The Beaver*, September, 1938, pp. 26-31). See introduction, p. xlv.

²Hargrave to Finlayson, February, 1841: "Should the statements uttered by professed witnesses be true (of which I think there are strong doubts so far as they contain all the truth) sure am I that the most undoubted mania must have governed that mind I had esteemed so highly."

³John Charles to Hargrave, Red River, February 23, 1835: "You will hear that there was nearly . . . a row with the Half Breeds, which Originated by Mr. T. Simpson giving One of them a Crack on the Arm, with the Fire Tongs and kicking him out of the Room, because the fellow was half drunk & I believe Abusive. A Large Party Assembled at *Battosh's House* and sent a message that unless Thomas Simpson was Punished, they would take him from the Fort, or that Fifty Pounds should be given to the Man as a Compensation, to this however it was not agreed but the affair was made up by giving the fellow 5£ and a Keg of Rum. . . . It is however high time to check their Impudence otherwise they will sett all Authority at defiance."

⁴Donald Ross Papers, Thomas Simpson to Ross, Fort Norman, September 9, 1837: "Our principle was 'Risk all for glory' and the Highest was our protection. . . . I had the honor . . . of unfurling the Company's flag there and of taking possession of all our discoveries in His Majesty's name." Same to same, Fort Simpson, October 26, 1839: "All that now remains unknown of the Arctic America is the great Gulf of Boothia, otherwise Prince Regents Inlet, from whence we returned and 'none shall take it out of our hands'."

the 1st August and evidently went by the States to get before Dease, who sailed from this in September by the Ship. From the whole story I cannot believe that he killed himself, altho' he most likely destroyed the other two, as he said to the survivors that they had nothing to fear as he shot Legros and Bird¹ because they meant to kill him. They likewise say that they saw no symptom of insanity, but I daresay you have seen the whole affair as the Yankee papers got possession of it immediately. He had just got his commission as Trader and has left two children at Red River. Every one seemed to like him and poor M^{rs} Finlayson has suffered dreadfully, he was her first cousin and they were all much attached to and very proud of him. . . . It must have been fearful for her as one of the victims was a favorite son of old M^r Bird a gentleman at Red River, the other being a well-known Canadian whose son [also] was of the party, who being a half-breed would think it quite right to shoot one who killed his father. William knew them all.

M^r Grant² was here during his holidays and had an affair of honour on New Years Day with our countryman the tinsmith, who availed himself of a visit M^r G. made to the men's house to inform him that the whole Hon^{ble} Co^y were cheats and swindled the poor Indians. Things he c^d make at home for 2^d were sold here for 6^d or 8^d. So Grant stood up & gave him a blow to which Tinny exclaimed that it was curious to strike a man sitting on his own chest, whereupon Grant challenged him and stripped himself, remarking that there lay coat and commission. M^r Beith however declined combat and listened quietly to his adversary's opinion of him, which was given without any delicacy. . . .

There were two balls given by the gentlemen (clerks) during the holidays. I went and sat in a room off that in which they were dancing, for a little. It was a humbling affair. 40 squaws old and young with their hair plaited in long tails, nothing on their heads but their everlasting blankets smelling of smoke and everything obnoxious. Babies almost newly born & in their cradles were with their mothers & all nursing them in the face of everyone. I turned in horror from a row of black necks and there sat M^{rs}

¹Antoine Legros, and John Bird, the son of Chief Factor James Bird, Red River.

²Richard Grant.

Gladman in the same style before the gentlemen and men of the fort besides a lot of Indians. I was glad to come home and when Harg^{ve} left them at 11 sundry squaws had composed themselves to sleep and others had got riotous, Madame Poukie John or Gunpowder having pinched his ear till he nearly yelled and given William such a thump on his side that he could not breathe. The younger women do not drink, but take a kettle with them into which they pour every thing, wine, rum shrub or brandy, or even porter & carry it off to drink at leisure. They were all here on New Years and a select party of 10 were allowed to come in to me. [illegible passage] On coming into my room they were entertained with madeira, but they scarcely tasted it as they said it was too strong. In the whole drove there was only one I c^d call pretty. She was about 12 y^{rs} old and is called Daylight having been born at that time. There was a great beauty in the interior called the Boss as her father had a hump of the buffalo to dinner on that occasion

28. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

[York Factory] 14th June 1841

My dear Mama

As the late winter was very severe there is a possibility that the ship may not arrive in time to return this season, so I write again by Red River as I am sure you will be glad to know that Baby was born on Thursday 1st April and has been with the exception of a cough which does not reduce him at all perfectly well ever since. I soon got well as I was up in a week & quite recovered in 3, but I have suffered very much since from my bowels. Indeed for some weeks I was useless, and here there was no medicine but castor oil and aloes that will be of any use as no vegetable extract will keep. I could not take the latter so lived upon oil two doses a day. They said nursing disagreed with me but I am well now & Baby gets nothing but milk. They all say he is a very strong child as he fights well & can perch himself up quite stiff. He is very knowing at any rate as he knows well when he is attended to & shouts if I speak to any one but himself. He knows Harg^{ve} and Margaret but allows himself to be kissed

by all the squaws, who exclaim when they meet him, "Very fat! Very white!" A band of them came the day after he was born to ask for me & to see the Speaking Cushion (which is son) and were surprised that they were not admitted to our room. M^{rs} Gladman was very kind, she came over when I was ill and staid two days, nursed Baby for nearly a week as his first exploit was to insist on drink before he was dressed so the D^r said I had better let her give him some. The consequence was that his stomach was stretched to such a width that my life was a burden to me for a fortnight when he took a fancy to walking up & down the room so that we are kept marching all the time he is not asleep or drinking. He is a tremendous screamer & will not allow himself to be dressed or even taken out of his tub without a tremendous disturbance.

M^r Grant sent me two kegs of potatoes. I have not seen one for many months now & often think of Mary Clarke picking them out of the pot for our lunch & my fastidiousness. This still exists as I cant swallow any of M^r Grant's which have not originally been of the first quality & are not improved by their voyage. I suppose Baby will be christened by the Methodists for want of others. I much fear his name will be Joseph as it is the name of Harg^{ves} father.

The Indians are flocking in on all sides with the produce of their hunts. They arrive ragged & wretched looking but in an hour are stalking or rather gliding about the Fort in scarlet leggins, new white blanket capots, & pale blue cloth or Highland bonnets, tastefully decorated with cock's feathers or ribbons, which they get in exchange for their skins. The poor children look ludicrous, no trowsers or leggins, nothing but the capot which like a boy's surtout is close from neck to waist but alas it does not cross a morsel below that & the wearer is scuddy. They seem quite satisfied & not at all bashful about walking in this garb. A Chief poked his head into our room & giggling as if it were an excellent joke he demanded rum. Gibault interpreted & the old man at last shook his head & said he feared he w^d be able to shoot no more whales as he c^d not conjure without it. He lives on Nelson's Land & shoots whales for blubber, for the huskie dogs. Marg^t gave him a small tumbler of brandy which he drank at once. He has 2 wives. The conjuring is a favorite way of getting what

they want & there is no way of prevailing even on those who are Christians to give it up. The Rev. M^r Jones¹ was taken wth a very good & converted Indian. He had been long in his family & on his return to England he left the Indian here, whose first exhibition was to set up a conjuring tent & commence his incantations. They have however a great passion for consulting the D^r & getting "Musky Kee" medicines. I am often sorry for the poor D^r. He is very zealous & is evidently well versed in his profession but I suspect he did not know where he was coming to & I think he is dispirited. I have good reason to be grateful to him as he had his own trouble with me, neither Marg^t nor M^{rs} Gladman knowing anything, he had every thing to do, even to making my bed. I likewise got well whenever Baby was born & M^{rs} Gladman said I w^d have died had he not been there. The ladies here never have a doctor nor do they go to their bed but sit on their knees & she was clear for my bestirring myself. I never will forget the look of astonishment & incredulity with which she stared at him when he congratulated me on my good behavior. She must have thought him easily pleased . . .

29. TO FLORENCE MACTAVISH

York Factory 4th September 1841

My dear Flora

. . . M^r Evans has had 30 Pagans, some striding about the Church, some lying on their noses, others smoking & speaking, but he preached right on & never looked as if he had a better right to speak than then. I went to one of the Indian meetings & they all came, not knowing a word that was said. They are a horrid set, the children speaking aloud & those who can walk, as old as 7 at least, going from side to side of mama, open-

¹The Reverend David T. Jones was sent in 1823 to Red River by the Church Missionary Society as chaplain to the Hudson's Bay Company, to succeed the Reverend John West. He carried on the school established by West, and enlarged it by adding a boarding-school for girls, of which his wife was the head. On the death of Mrs. Jones in October, 1836, and the return of Jones to England in 1838, the Company bought the property from the church and leased it to Jones's assistant, John Macallum.

ing her blanket & drinking away, the squaws sitting with their eyes on the floor as if they did not know. M^r E. had once to leave the church in a fit of hysterical laughter. A little boy about 12 who had not a stitch on him but part of the breast & the sleeve of a coloured shirt, marched up, stared at M^r E. who was preaching, & then retired, but came back & did the same thing again. His little stomach & bottom were so prominent & he looked so majestic & dignified that M^r E. was fairly set a-laughing. Not an Indian here or at Norway H^e can speak a word of English, except old Saunders & Morris, our fishermen. Saunders met Baby & said, "I s'pose us too ugly, kiss him." Margaret said Oh no, so he embraced Beppo. 3 Indians came into my room the other day, one looked bashful, a huge man he was, so the others after a great deal of resistance got hold of a large medal of the Queen & paraded it to me. If you had just seen their delight, the man wore it round his neck, I had seen him flourishing about the Fort quite spryly with it dangling outside his cape and I cant guess what made him affect the coyness in exhibiting it to me. He was the chief & had got it from a gentleman, they were all tipsy & [paper torn] in a melancholy fashion, besides taking off their gloves every minute & shaking hands with me warmly. I have seen some hideous savages, wretches with nothing but their blankets & scarlet leggins, some even without them, as black as crows & as proud as Lucifer, with their long hair plaited & fastened like a woman. They always wished to see Baby & as our windows are low they came if they saw him in the room & glared at him with their noses flattened against the glass. They call him Wastrappe (emphasis on the trap) which signifies Light eye, as their own is dead black invariably & his is the very colour of Papa's, his lashes are very long & black. The Canadian half breeds are the lads, they some times pay a whole year's wages for a cap, often a Highland bonnet covered with silver work as M^{rs} Barr w^d say & ostrich feathers. I admire the Iroquois more than any Indians I have seen as my friends in blankets are extraordinarily ugly though large & well carried. Our former fellow-traveller M^r Thomas has gone into partnership with a young half-breed Highland gentleman who when he knocks at your door & you ask who is there answers "Tommy M^cDairmid, sir."¹

¹Thomas, youngest of Andrew McDermot's six sons. For the history of this

Robert Ballantyne¹ a son of the newspaper editor & brother of the artist in Edinburgh came by the ship. He brought me a letter of introduction from Lady Simpson who calls him her cousin. He is barely 15 & a very clever boy. The Governor ordered that he should have a winter here but Harg^{ve} thought the Simpsons w^d like his being with M^{rs} Finlayson so he sent him on to Red River with old M^r Charles. M^{rs} F. will be the better of him as he is smart & very gentlemanlike & diverting, straight from the Stockbridge Academy. . . .

30. TO MARY MACTAVISH

York Factory 9th Sept 1841

My dear Polly

I received both y^r letters & was very glad to hear y^u were well, as the only means I had of knowing any thing about you were by dreams, & these did not give me a very good idea of y^r health. I was always having such horrid dreams, really I often c^d not speak of the fears they left. You did not say whether Mary Clarke is with you, I often wish I had her here, for we are ill at the cooking, beefsteaks fried in what they call country fat (reindeer) said beef-steaks being part of a superannuated ox which was not expected to survive the winter, so they made up their minds to

family see letter 51. Thomas died in 1848 at Pembina, where he was in charge of a post for the Hudson's Bay Company.

¹Robert Michael Ballantyne (1825-1894) was the son of Alexander Ballantyne, a junior partner in his brothers' firm of John and James Ballantyne, printers and publishers, of Edinburgh. He entered the Hudson's Bay Company's service in 1841, served at Fort Garry, 1841-2; at Norway House, 1842-3; at York Factory, 1843-5; and at the Kings Posts from 1845 to 1847, when he left the service and re-returned to Scotland. See C. Parnell, "Ballantyne the Brave" (*The Beaver*, December, 1941, pp. 4-6); and George A. Dunlop and C. P. Wilson, "George Barnston" (*ibid.*, pp. 16-17). See also introduction, pp. lx-lxii. Ballantyne's relationship Lady Simpson is confirmed in Ballenden's letter-book: Ballenden to Finlayson, to February 15, 1854: "I saw a few days ago, your matrimonial connections the Ballentines . . . I mean Miss Jane Ball. & Mr. R. Ballantyne. . . . Robert is connected with the firm of Constable and Co." This relationship may have accounted for Ballantyne's entry into the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1851 his sister married Hector McKenzie, nephew of Duncan and Nicol Finlayson, with whom Ballantyne had served while at Fort Garry.

shoot him for our mess, but I prevailed on them to let the cook, who was a butcher in Orkney, give the poor animal a natural death. It was not so bad as it might have been considering its age & former services. We ate every morsel of him, & except the head & about 2 lbs. made into beef tea for a sick Gladman, every scrap of that beast was either roasted or fried. We are often short of fresh provisions in summer, scurvy prevails among the men, but I have always a duck or plover, altho' it is little I care as I eat alone from 1st June to 1st October. I had messmates enough this summer & good swallows the ladies had. I was quite amazed since I came here, I do not consume in 4 days as much as I used to take to lunch at home, but M^{rs} Evans & her interpreter, an Indian in delicate health, used to eat 8 slices of buffalo tongue from the fat end & as thick as Gibault c^d cut them. This was at supper in her own room & she used to say she found nothing so good for her as a glass of water & a spoonful of wine with a piece of dry bread.

M^r Cochran of Red River objected to giving Tom Simpson Christian burial.¹ His body & those of his victims were disinterred & brought to the Settlement. The others were entire but poor Tom was not but I never liked to ask any questions but M^r Manson told me that his limbs were not there & he inferred that he had not had fair play & that the story of the survivors was not true, but I daresay wolves may have reached him. When I thought of the letter, so kind & full of glee, that we found here on our arrival, I could not persuade myself that he had killed himself & M^r Gladman & Manson both think he had killed the others in self-defense & been shot by one of the survivors who being half-breeds w^d do it spontaneously on seeing their father shot by him whether on provocation or not. At any rate his

¹Thomas Simpson is supposed to have been buried just outside consecrated ground. The grave is now within the enlarged cemetery of St. John's cathedral. The following entry is in the St. John's or "Upper" church burial records, in the Reverend William Cockran's handwriting: "Thomas Simpson—Chief Trader H.B.C. Service, buried October 15, 1841, about 32 years, by Wm. Cockran." In 1940, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada erected in Winnipeg, Manitoba, a monument to commemorate Thomas Simpson's services in Arctic exploration. (*Annual report*, Canadian Historical Association, 1940, pp. 120-1). It is situated on the banks of the Red River, in St. John's park, close by the cemetery where he is buried.

friends believe or say nothing to the contrary so that no other one has any business. W^m & Harg^{ve} both knew every one of the parties. The survivors are about Williams age & he doubts their veracity. No more will ever be known as the half breeds even in dying dont find any relief in confessing.

Dugald has covered himself with glory & been reported by D^r McLoughlin for the style in which he got his brigade across the mountains, not an otter damaged nor a man either, which is more than older people can brag of, as the accidents both to life & property have been numerous this year. . . .

31. TO DUGALD MACTAVISH, SENIOR

York Factory 10 Sept. 1841.

My dear Papa

They have thinned our ranks in a most effectual manner by removing M^r Gladman & Lane & put in a little boy of 16 to supply their place. Willie has got M^r Gladman's situation but Hargrave has succeeded to the other vacancies, & has his own work and what William used to do to get through. There was a meeting of Council held at Red River. They are cutting off every thing they can from us, even the privilege of purchasing furs at an exorbitant price.¹ We may buy & wear them here but cannot take them out of the country, under a penalty of £50 w^{ch} I wont incur, so that I rejoice that I have little to lose. I will confine myself to lynx which will not ruin me if I have to leave the country while it is unworn. There have been an appalling number of casualties since we came here, not a packet from inland that has not brought tidings of something distressing. A Chief Factor² was killed on the Columbia by an Indian who thought he had caused the death of his Chief by bad medicine, for they imagine that the whites have something that destroys at any distance. The Indian had watched for days & had had no opportunity

¹E. H. Oliver (ed.), *The Canadian north-west, its early development and legislative records* (Ottawa, 1914-15), vol. ii, p. 827.

²This was Samuel Black (1785-1841), in charge at Kamloops. For the official report of his death see Rich, *McLoughlin letters, second series*, pp. 247-9. For his biography see Rich, *Simpson's Athabasca journal*, pp. 429-30.

so he kindled a fire in a hall & M^r Black rose to see what it meant & reaching the door fell back among his wife & children . . . I believe he died on the spot & amid the confusion the savage escaped and will be protected by his tribe, as he acted from a superstitious motive. The brother of our steward¹ was also murdered but as it was for the sake of plundering him his Chief gave him up immediately & he was hanged by D^r M^cLoughlin over the gate of Fort Vancouver. We had to create a jail this year, the first there has been at York. The inmate is a half-breed who killed a Canadian at the Saskatchewan. They had been quarrelling & this poor wretch thought it only magnanimous to murder the other so he ran a poker through his body & he died in 3 days. The Indian was taken up & tried & found guilty of manslaughter and condemned to a years imprisonment at York & banishment to Ungava on Hudson's Straits. I have not seen him but they say he is a harmless gentle-looking boy. The poor creature was brought from Red River in irons & had not been changed so that he was in a shocking state when he reached York.

There is a D^r Tolmie² a young man from the Columbia who has been here since July. His character is of the highest description & nothing c^d exceed his devotion to duties w^{ch} must have required hard work of mind & body for he had the packing of all the furs to be shipped this year & had to keep the hours of the common men from ½ past 4 a.m. to ½ past 6 p.m. After that he had a class for teaching the people & children any thing they liked, and arithmetic & sacred music in particular. You will laugh at the singing but if you heard how striking it is to hear the Indians sing & how readily they do it at meeting while not a white man or woman among us could or would join the minister except D^r T. you w^d not wonder at his doing his best.

I was inexpressibly horrified to hear that in some congregations in Canada & very generally in the States wine is not used at

¹Brother of William McKay. See Glazebrook, *Hargrave correspondence*, p. 343.

²William Fraser Tolmie had been in charge at Nisqually, in the Columbia Department, and was on his way to England on furlough. For an account of his trip to York see G. T. Allan, "Journal from Vancouver to York Factory, 1841" (Provincial Archives of British Columbia). See also Dorothy O. Johansen, "William Fraser Tolmie of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1833-1870" (*The Beaver*, September, 1937, pp. 29-32); and S. F. Tolmie, "My father: William Fraser Tolmie" (*British Columbia Historical Quarterly*, vol. i, pp. 227-40).

the Communion tables, coffee being the substitute, I think water or nothing at all w^d be less preposterous. If this hubbub lasted much longer I think I w^d be very apt to get wrong in the head, as it is I am quite confused, I feel as nervous as if I had the whole responsibility of the safety of the ships¹ on my own poor head

32. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

York Factory 16th Sept. 1841

• My dear Mama

. . . When he was born he was small & thin but now there is no smallness about him, & he is as tall & erect and much broader than 2 little half-breeds who have been trotting about the Fort all spring. The pitching & tossing that he insists on having is inconceivable, but when he is attended to he is never cross. The D^r says he is the biggest boy he ever saw & the most precocious as regards bodily acquirements for he cut his 2nd tooth on the 13th July & very often bites his thumb till it is cut. I wish you c^d hear him laughing, the least thing sends him off & he never stops while he has strength to cackle. The only thing that invariably makes him cry is when Harg^{ve} goes out of the room before he happens to be tired of his company, & then he does shriek, & it is the same when he comes in & does not take him.

We are all sick of church & churchmen & are going it very strong with the Methodists, who assuredly give us plenty of buttering if they cannot get up genuine gratitude. I don't deny that *we* are anxious to get a good word even from Wesleyans, for no Episcopalian has come who has not reviled the Co^y for every thing that was execrable. They may for what I know be right in most things but one, viz. the maltreating of the Indians, they are very far wrong, & they must know it too. For in summer the Indians are employed out of charity & till the ship arrives it is ludicrous to see a band of 15 or 16 with their spades or whatever they are using lying beside them & they all squat on their faces asleep. This is in the forenoon, at night they either work in their own way, though Alec w^d do it better, with their pipes

¹Letitia was writing on the day before the two ships left York. See introduction, pp. lviii-lx.

in their mouths, or else they sit chattering or gambling, of which they are very fond, till the bell rings, & up they jump & run as hard as they can in a long string along the platform to the provision sheds where they get their allowances & go to their tents. There are some curiosities among them. They all say "Sir" to me, the half-breeds call me "small M^r Hargrave" I mean the children do, for of course the full grown ones are as good as the whites. One of them M^r Sinclair¹ from Lac la Pluie told me that M^{rs} Finlayson was "not in the least like Frances" meaning Lady Simpson. But the best of them was M^r Roberts² who came by the ship & who described himself as an Apostolical Evangelist going to have Orders when the Bishop of Canada visits Red River. He took me very much by the hand as the clerks laughed him out of their society & Harg^{ve} scarcely w^d speak to him, & every forenoon he came in & played with Baby whose name I blush to say *is* Joseph James. He identified himself with the Church & in discoursing of the movements of the Hierarchy he always said *we*. How he did vituperate Wesleyans

33. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

York Factory 14th [-16th] May '42

My dear Mama

Willie is preparing to start for Norway H^e to attend the Meeting of Council next month & as they will send a canoe down to Canada I think this letter has a good chance of reaching y^u soon.

We have all got well through with another Winter, which they say has been unusually mild. I did not perceive any difference, except that since Feb^y we have been plagued with miserable cold thaws & splashy platforms, & at other times intense cold. Only on Tuesday even^g I was afraid I had frozen my finger it felt so queer on taking off my mit for a moment. Today we have south wind & it is very warm. The river has been much broken for a

¹William Sinclair, junior. For biography see Fleming, *Minutes of Council*, pp. 456-8.

²J. Roberts was sent out as a catechist for the Church of England in Red River. He returned to England in 1843.

week back, but has not yet "gone off", from the cold of the weather—The ice is so rotten from the frequent thaws that there will be no "fun" such as we had last spring when 3 days great heat was all the preparation it had & it was riven up as hard as rock & perfectly green & fresh. It is 18 inches thinner than it was then, & they could scarcely get blocks of a sufficient thickness for the ice house in March.

Beppo has been walking alone since the 7th March, but poor Marg^t has to run after him with arms open from $\frac{1}{2}$ past 5 in the morn^g till 7 at night, for he is so careless that he cant be trusted to stand for a moment, he has no sense of fear & does not know how to steady himself if he had. He has been perfectly well ever since I wrote & tries hard to speak, though he can only say distinctly papa, Mama, & bull, meaning the oxen for which he has a great admiration. He is an enormous size both in height & circumference. I weaned him the first Monday after his birthday, & it was a sore heart to me, as I thought he was a gone coon but he took it very coolly & in a weeks time was eating six meals a day, while before he only took a little breakfast, & drank all night. When he is sleepy he sometimes demands a little yet & I am always afraid to take him before any one. He likes Marg^t so much that when he sees me he gets quite frightened that I will take him & clutches her gown & yells as loud as he can bawl—She does nothing now but sew & keep him & she appears to like the occupations. The sewing is altogether at his frocks & he has a legion, covered with puffs & buttons & made as intricate as possible to hinder Madame Daunais¹ from making little Jean Battiste's on the same model.

I have not heard from Red River since Jan^y. At that [time] M^r Finlayson was recovering from an attack of inflammation of the lungs. I feel very nervous about his poor wife as I am sure she will be miserable. They have no right medical man,² & he is very delicate & has been in bad health for 17 years. M^r Charles

¹Wife of one of the Company's best builders. See Glazebrook, *Hargrave correspondence*, p. 265.

²She is probably referring to Dr. John Bunn (1802-1861), who was a licentiate of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, not a graduate. Duncan Finlayson never recovered his former health after an accidental gunshot wound suffered in 1825. See Rich, *McLoughlin letters, first series*, p. 165.

found his wife on her death bed when he got home, she rallied on his arrival but sank in a few days & was followed by her oldest daughter who died 4 weeks after from fatigue, anxiety, & watching her mothers sick bed. His other daughter M^{rs} MacCallum¹ was then confined to bed from a mis carriage, caused by these trials & M^{rs} Finlayson says they were apprehensive about one of his sons who was suffering much from the shock. Miss C died of brain fever, & was only 25— She was taken ill at M^{rs} MacCallums & expired there. It is with them Miss Allan is. Poor M^{rs} Nicol Finlayson died of dropsy at Red River. M^{rs} F says her sufferings were very great, she has left 2 sons in Englnd & a little girl 2 years old— Her husband was absent & on his return she was dead & buried— M^{rs} F offered to take the girl but he w^d not part with her. I had also a letter from M^{rs} Gladⁿ who *detests* the Settlement. The Clergy arrived in safety, but I had no letter from the lady, as only the *Comp^y* write by the walking packets— M^r Cowley² was nearly dead & had to be carried out of & into the boat in a blanket. He attributed his illness to *our* bread.³ Y^u will say he is a fit person to come to a savage country. At Fort Garry M^r Roberts slept in a room thro' w^{ch} a stove pipe passed, but no stove. He did not know what it was & hung his trowsers over it. Next morn^g they had a large piece burned out of them

¹Elizabeth (Betsy), youngest daughter of John Charles, was married to John Macallum (1806-1849), in February, 1836.

²The Reverend Abraham Cowley had just arrived by the ship to be assistant to the Reverend William Cockran, at Red River. For his subsequent career see J. J. Hargrave, *Red River* (Montreal, 1871), pp. 107, 113.

³John Charles to Hargrave, Red River, December 10, 1841: "The Bread that I sent back for, bad as it was I would never have mentioned, had it not been, that it was nearly killing Mr. Cowley it was not baked, had never rose, and was like a Lump of Lead, and from making use of it the poor Parson became so Weak from Sickness that he was Carried in Boat in a Blanket, the fourth Morning after leaving YF however after that Morning he begun to gain Strength, and we gave him all our White Biscuit and at length he got round but I'll come good he will not forget the YF Bread for some Time, and indeed neither shall I, but I am an old Stager, and made no use of it, for actually it was not fit to make use off *which was* however *no fault of yours* had I been alone, and still lingering in the Service I should have *thought promotion* your Object, & that *heavy Bread* would have removed me the quicker out of your Way, but *joking apart* actually at one Time I were apprehensive the poor Man, would have died, and his young Wife poor Creature was in a Sad State till we reached the Rock and there the Parson was nearly himself again."

much to his amazement. Miss Ross tells me her mother is coming to York in Augst with Jessie who is going home to school. She is next to Miss Ross, who is now 20. They have 5 daughters & 2 sons. M^{rs} Evans also wrote me a letter that I could hardly stand from a Methodist. I replied by a middling stiff note commencing with dear Madam. I feel satisfied that she is dangerous. She had ended hers with y^r affec^{te} friend.

The Indians here are all labouring under a religious frenzy.¹ They preach, perform miracles speak unknown tongues, die & come to life again, wont hunt, & it is extraordinary how many performances they have. People are afraid to speak in case of bringing "The Church" down on them, so that I dont know how the Inland savages get on, but it seems plain that a set of perfect animals as they are can get no good from hearing of mysteries & miracles, and I think that wretches who dont know six times in a year what it is to have a full meal, are not likely to have a keen sense of the goodness of God. The very aspect of the country would in some degree chill the feelings of any one of sound mind.

Two Chief traders across the Mountain are dead, one a Canadian² broke his neck riding & the other died of consumption I believe. We have not heard from Dugald or the Governor—Lady Simpson had a daughter³ on the 4 Augst but M^{rs} Finlayson only heard of it from M^r Keith⁴ at Lachine.

When I began my letter I told y^u it was a warm day. Now it is snowing furiously & a gale of north wind. The Fort had been clear except where the drifts were & the garden being enclosed with stockades would take me over the shoulders. There is no where any appearance of vegetation. I have cresses & radishes in a box in the house, & have also planted French beans to try

¹This religious frenzy increased and was a matter of much concern until it reached the climax related by Letitia in 1843. See letter 43.

²Pierre Pambrun. See Rich, *McLoughlin letters, first series*, pp. 351-2. The second chief trader mentioned has not been identified.

³Augusta D'Este Simpson, named after her father's friend, Sir Augustus D'Este, was born at her grandparents' home, New Grove House, in London on August 3, 1841.

⁴James Keith (1784-1851) was superintendent of the Hudson's Bay Company's affairs at Lachine. See Rich, *Simpson's Athabasca journal*, p. 444. He married Susan Angus. The marriage contract was dated Edinburgh, July 7, 1845. (From his Will, in Somerset House, dated April 10, 1851).

if they will come to any good. There seems to be no parsley in the country. We have spinage in Augst but they maltreat it, cut the whole stock boil it bodily, mash fibre seeds & all with butter & pepper. Y^u may believe it is a pleasant dish. I really think that the cookery here will end me. It is fearful. I cant go into the kitchen & bully a great fat Orkney brute.¹ Any suggestion I may venture upon goes thro' Gibeault & there are fights. Gibeault loads his gun, Marg^t yells there will be murder. Marg^t is quite useless as she cant make babys porridge & I have my own pangs when I see him fed in such a way. The poor thing knows no better & flourishes. The bread is made with leaven & a little sour. For several weeks past I have taken none, fish to breakfast, & goose duck or venison to dinner, not a morsel of other thing, either in the way of bread or vegetable. We will soon have nettles, potatoes cant be got as the old ones dont keep in the ship & the new ones are not ready to leave Red River with the boats—I often wish I had Mary Clark, to bake scones or cakes, as neither Marg^t nor Houston can make them without butter.

M^r Clouston,² a son of my Orkney friend, has charge of one of Hargraves posts & was here in Feb^y with a half breed who manages another, called M^r MacKay,³ he is a Canadian $\frac{1}{2}$ breed, & we have written to him to ask if he will give us his eldest daughter as a "help" & to look after Beppo. It is without any rejoicing that I tell y^u that before the middle of Decem^{br} I shall have gone over all my sorrows again. It is a trying season, but it cant be helped. If M^{rs} Gladman were here I w^d be easier in my mind, but if I sh^d be ill there is not a human being who can hold a child, except Marg^t & she poor sinner never apparently saw one before Joseph. Even Betsy is going with her husband to settle on the Columbia. Besides she, Marg^t, suffers from headaches like Isabel Duncan & altho she never told but once that she was ill, she gets so haggard that I know in a moment. She was ill with English Cholera in Feb^y & I think the D^r was apprehensive about her.

¹This man's name was Houston. He was cook for the gentlemen's mess, and for Letitia's in summer.

²Robert Clouston had entered the service in 1838 at Norway House. He was in charge at Oxford House in 1841-2.

³William McKay was post master at Island Lake. In summer he had charge of the work on the communications of the Hayes river transportation route.

She had been very ill all night & dressed baby in the morning with Gibeaults help, before he was quite dressed, she fainted from the violence of the cramps— She was up keeping baby next day, but looked wretched for a month. The mumps were brought here by the ship. There has been no case at York for some time. This house escaped w^{ch} no other but the gentlemens did in the Fort. They were raging in Red River when we last heard.

We are getting a new room built for a nursery— It is a good size with 2 large light closets—

I was going to tell y^u last letter that many gentlemen here have a notion that Indian conjurers have dealings wth Satan. To begin with what *ought* to be good authority M^r Evans told Harg^{ve} that among the *Saulteux* he once heard that the family of an Indian who had been long absent had applied to a noted conjurer to ascertain what had become of him & on what day he w^d return. The conjuring tent was erected & after due ceremony the friends were informed that he was then sleeping in the fork of 2 trees at a certain place for the rain was falling & that he w^d be home on a stated day. M^r Evans heard of this & watched on the day for the man's arrival, went to him & asked where he had been at the time the conjuror had operated. So he told him he had taken shelter from heavy rain in the fork of 2 trees & had slept at the place the conjuror described. Evans converted the conjuror & tried to get the secret of his art from him, but he always evaded the subject & said it was bad. I have heard lots of similar stories. As far as I can learn they bribe the devil with rum to go into a small low tent quite close so that no one can see, & then the enemy & the conjuror make a great noise & all the people stay quietly outside. One of our conjurors has become religious, says Grace over his rum & has put away his *oldest* wife for conscience sake—

As the weather is so cold there is no chance of the river opening & I may leave off for a day or two.

16th The packet is to be closed today so I must finish my letter. I think Willie will have some entertainment as M^{rs} Gladman who is the mortal foe of M^{rs} Ross is to be at Norway H^e.¹ M^{rs} Finlayson is expected but I doubt if she will go so near M^{rs} Evans. Willie is resolved to be idolatrous in his attitude to M^{rs} Gladman

¹William Mactavish was going to attend Council at Norway House.

& to keep the reverend lady at a distance. If she once gets hold of him, I fear he will not keep his resolution as she kills people with kindness & sponge cake in the forenoon & tea & psalm tunes in the even^g. It seems Miss Ross has not yet got either the ear or skill to tune her guitar, but she plays & sings boldly trusting too confidently in the ignorance of her hearers who make their own [opinion?] of her. Miss E. performs *Home Sweet Home* & *The Plough boy* on the accordin, but is too bashful to sing except as second.

The Holidays were what is considered very gay this winter. The gentlemen had two balls in their house & M^r H. likewise gave 2. As there was no fiddler, they took the liberty of unpacking M^r Gladmans beloved organ¹ & Willie & the D^r performed by turns. They kept it in their house & night & day the unfortunate instrument was grinding & all feet dancing. Hargrave gave another ball while Messrs Clouston & MacKay were here, when it was again in requisition. I did not see any of the exhibitions— The ladies all behaved well, only my friend Betsy “got drunk” as she told me & was carried home. Madame Poukie John, also forgot herself & stole as much of the supper as she could, till Gibeault spied her. The old lady has been turned out of the Fort for her ultra views of religion. Having turned saint she persuaded her son our hunter to become a preacher, so he gave the Indians a deer he had killed, & got into notoriety among them. The mother pitched a tent for a church. All the Indians here with 3 or 4 exceptions went— M^r Poukie John appeared in full canonicals

¹The organ soon followed the Gladman family to Oxford House, where Robert Ballantyne encountered it on his way from York to Norway House in 1845. He says: “I spent a delightful evening with this kind and hospitable family . . . till a tall box in a corner of the room attracted my attention. This, I discovered to my delight was no less than a barrel-organ, on which one of the young ladies at my request played a few tunes. Now barrel-organs, be it known, were things I detested from my infancy upwards. . . . Four years’ residence, however, in the bush had rendered me much less fastidious in music . . . so that it was with a species of rapture that I now ground away at the handle of this organ, which happened to be a very good one, and played in perfect tune. ‘God save the Queen,’ ‘Rule Britannia,’ ‘Lord M’Donald’s Reel,’ and the ‘Blue Bells of Scotland’ were played over and over again; . . . and sounded like the well-known voices of long long absent friends” (Ballantyne, *Hudson’s Bay*, 2nd ed., pp. 206-7).

being two blankets sewed together with deer sinew & created a sensation. The women took fits &c. & Mad^m was turned off with her son next day. It was her daughter who was married last winter & sent a message to her mother to send her some tea & oatmeal as she was sick of fish & potatoes at Oxford. They cant speak any English.

I hope that in 7 weeks at the very most I shall hear that y^u are all well. Somehow I feel as if I did not care what the rest of the world did, but I trust that nothing has gone far wrong among any of my friends. Will y^u give my love to Polly & Flora. There will be another canoe starting in Augst for Canada but the ship letters will probably reach England first. I will most likely write y^u however in case the Rupert may not get home as such things happen & I will have to tell y^u about a servant. I have not spoken to Marg^t nor will I till she hears from her father¹ but I still think they will take her home. He has been very unsettled & left this Service where he had the offer of a post mastership, board & luxuriant living at Severn, where he w^d be his own master. His rank w^d have been same as Wilsons. The situation was pretty desirable for a tailor, I think his salary £60 a year. He had 40 here as tailor, besides living, but home he went & they are next to starving in Edin^h with 3 sons & another daughter who I believe is what Marg^t was before she went to M^{rs} Gillons—a sewer or mantua maker, at any rate she is in her fathers house. I am sure they are very decent & Marg^t has evidently been taught to respect herself as her conduct & even manner are unexceptionable. She is as willing & anxious as the first day I saw her, but her health is not good.

The people in the Fort are all very fat, Willie & I are the thinnest in it. He is well & seems to be iron tho bony— I am a perfect skeleton & am well pleased that it is not the reverse. Harg^{ve} cant wear a stitch of the clothes he had before he went home. He will soon be worse than Don^d Ross who is the stoutest man of his height that I know. M^{rs} Gladman became a great size while here. Joseph is very big fat & strong, his cheeks are red & when pinched feel as if he had something hard in his mouth. The strange Indians admire him when he appears on the platform with scarlet merino frock morocco shoes & white stockings— While

¹See introduction, p. xxxi.

they hold him in their arms they keep smoking their pipes in his face. He goes to them all quite readily—I suppose it must be surprize that makes him do so as Willie, the cook & Gibeault are the only white people he will allow to lay hands upon him. I am wearying terribly for letters this year & can get none till Willie comes back probably in the beginning of July certainly not till the very end of June. They dont expect Dugald this season but I always think he may come. I suppose y^u will get our Decem^r letter about this time. There was nothing worthy of note in it, but I always write when I hear of a certainty of its getting forward before ship time. I wish I c^d hear as often but sending off, & getting back packets are different things.

Our ink gets frozen & is bad, there will be no better till the ship comes— The madeira in the store is still solid. They cant fill the wine kegs till the barrelsfull thaw—the oil is in the same state— We breakfast at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 7. I am always up but take it in my own sitting room. Every one in the Fort is in bed by ten. On the 1st of June the gentlemen go over to the other the kitchen side of the Fort so that till 1st Octo^r I have the whole house to myself & eat alone unless I expressly invite someone or when M^{rs} Evans, Cowley or Ross are here. It is rather dull work but I think I prefer it to encountering so many men. I have not got reconciled to the one o'clock dinner & last summer used to keep it till tea time—six o'clock. The ladies here appear to have prodigious appetites judging from those I have seen & Willie says they are all the same high & low. M^{rs} Gladman wrote me that they had lived for 62 days on rice flour milk & potatoes at Fort Alex^r, as if she had had severe privations, no meat nor geese.

Harg^{ve} & W^m join me in best love to papa & the boys also M^r & M^{rs} Loudⁿ & M^{rs} Worsley.

With the same to y^u I ever am my dear Mama y^r m^o affec^{te}

LETITIA HARG^e

W^m offered John money after he went to Tobago but he declined it & said he had as much as he required.

If you write to or see the Hamiltons will you give them my kindest love.

N.B. After finishing I find that I was not guarded in the subject I chose for the end of my letter & it would have been

over the country that I had aspersed the appetite of the ladies. I hope this paper may be light enough to stand an envelope. It is always safest, as if I am to believe all I hear gossips are mightily anxious to get acquainted with my sentiments & notions of things & persons & I know would not scruple to read my letter if they could. I mean the womenkind, Lay & clerical at Norway House. 3 of Willie's letters have disappeared there altogether & Harg^{ve} thinks some of his did not reach Red River last Summer. When M^{rs} Evans passed Oxford Ho. last Fall on her way home, she had the cool impudence to plunder Mr. Clouston's garden & carried off all the pease the poor boy was chuckling over & expecting a regale upon after living here all Summer & seeing nothing green. He had not got home so soon as she did & altho' she knew that he was behind her & w^d have nothing of the kind but miserable lumps of potatoes while she was going where they have abundance of every "garden stuff" from cabbage to cucumbers, yet she carried all off in her boat & Evans *lifted* one of the comp^{ys} canoes, there being no one but a $\frac{1}{2}$ breed guide at the place to protest it. Even the Indian Wesleyan dominie who is with Evans a pure Indian has allowances of flour, raisins butter currants wine [and] brandy that Hargrave or the oldest chief factor in the service has & yet they take more. Peter Jacobs¹ is the teacher's name. Miss Ross writes me that his sermons are horrid, he holds forth in the Fort in Evans' absence. His last discourse was a violent abuse of Potiphars wife, who he always styled lady Potiphar. He has a wife & family & is what they call a class teacher w^{ch}

¹J. H. Lefroy gave a glimpse of Peter Jacobs the following year when he visited the Reverend James Evans's school at Norway House during the latter's absence at York: "The school children amounting to 60 were soon got together although it was seven oclock in the Evening, and we heard them read and spell and sing in Indian and English, they are Crees, their language is a pretty one, the astonishing thing was to hear them repeat long Exercises, such as the Creed, sing hymns, read the Testament &c. in English: not one word of which any of them understand. The missionary wishes to prepare the way for their learning the language but I think goes too far. One little boy repeated the Lords Prayer perfectly in English, putting in the stops correctly, varying the tone in perfect imitation of an intelligent speaker, yet could not say it in his own language: in fact the teacher who is a Chipewyan Indian seemed to have the same sort of pride in their proficiency that a bird fancier has in an ingenious collection of piping bullfinches." (J. H. Lefroy to Sophia Lefroy, Norway House, August 8, 1843. From the original letter in the Public Archives of Canada).

they must be for 4 years previous to ordination. He lives in a house near the Indian camp. Evans is genteel & stipulated that he must reside in the Fort & a hot place they seem to make it.

The river is not yet clear. It has been broken now for 10 days. I don't recollect anything to tell you. An ox killed himself drinking cold water while hauling wood. Our best cow died during the holidays likewise a hen & a goose of fat. The poor hen froze. I have no charge of any of them. I have the hens & geese brought to me & keep them during the laying season, but the cows live out of the Fort summer & winter. None of them have calved yet but we have plenty of milk for tea & Joseph, & the churning time is only in the Fall, after all strangers have left us. The very saltest butter from Red River is used. The pepper & salt consumed in this country must be alarming to their Honors the Gov^t & committee, who restrain all excess in demands of goods &c. I must conclude again,

L H

34. TO DUGALD MACTAVISH, SENIOR

York Factory 27 May 1842

My dear Papa,

Hargrave had a letter from the Governor dated Vancouver. He appears in great spirits and says everything is in a prosperous state. The Russians of whom they had such a dread have turned out the most delightful neighbors and in place of being rivals are excellent customers. The Yankees sent out 2 war ships to explore survey &c. one was wrecked on the bar of the Columbia, all hands saved and entertained at Vancouver where they behaved in the most gentlemanlike manner, so that we seem friends with all the powers.¹ The part of the Governor's letter which gave

¹Simpson to Hargrave, Fort Vancouver, November 4, 1841: "You have no doubt heard of the American Discovery Expedition, which has been afloat for the last three years; they were in the river when I arrived here, having lost one of their ships, the Peacock corvette, on the bar coming in. Their object here, was to make a survey of the bar & river, but their whole deportment was Gentleman-like, & exempt from any national prejudice. Every civility was shown them while here & it is pleasing to be enabled to say, they duly appreciated the attentions they met with."

me pleasure was his intimation that Dugald will be here in June, I suppose to return in a week but still I will see him. At present the average income of a chief trader is from £450 to £400. I suspect the last is nearest. Of course a factor has 2 Shares, £800, they are constantly having dividends, as the furs are sold, sometimes only £20 at a time, and these misled me for a while. When we bought skins in this country we had to pay 25% above the average price in London, but this was not a sufficient check and we are now prevented taking them out of the country although we may wear them in it.

They can still walk on the swamps as the ice is solid, there is no appearance of thaw yet. The poor prisoner is still in jaol [*sic*] and a miserable-looking object. He had a fine face when put in but now looks like an old woman. He is [torn] and very gentle, I don't think older than 19 at the most.

The rations at Norway House are all fish, while here each man has a lb. of flour a day, pease, oatmeal, pork, pemmican, salt goose or plover, fresh partridges in winter or 9 months a year besides $\frac{1}{2}$ a pint of rum a week. If they wish anything but fish inland they have to buy it. They have allowances for their wives and families but they seldom let their servants encumber them unless they are very useful men. Besides flour pease and meal the rations are for a man one goose a day 3 ducks or 4 plovers or 4 partridges. I don't know the weight of fish but they always have them to breakfast. They buy their own tea, sugar, butter, and fat, which is hard reindeer brought from Churchill. They take great quantities of tea, and drink it to dinner regularly. There are numbers of little birds pass at present, the first that come are in March, and are called snowbirds, then blackbirds in April, they are very pretty and larger than our blackbird. After the thaw is fairly established the snowbirds go north and return late in the fall. Last of all the tribes that pass there is a kind of redbreast which sings a little. The frogs are still frozen hard but they will soon begin, they keep me from sleeping, they make such a wheetle, far worse than corncrakes. . . .

35. TO DUGALD MACTAVISH, SENIOR

York Factory 8th Sept^r 1842

My dear papa

The ship arrived safely at "5 fathom hole" on the 18th of last month. We got our letters out the morning before she anchored and every thing else arrived in perfect order. They are all as busy as they can be preparing for her departure. I wrote you in June & mentioned that the Gov^r gave us reason to expect to see Dugald, but W^m came from Norway H^e on the 1st of July & upset my expectations by the information that a M^r Anderson¹ was the only gentleman from the Columbia, & what was nearly as bad or worse, that the person who had charge of the English packet from Canada had left it behind him on the route, he did not know where. M^r Ross sent back a canoe in search & it was found at Bas de la Riviere & reached us on the 7th Augst. Fortunately for me I was more favored than others as Mama's letter of Nov^r was brought by Willie— Dugald is still in his old situation at Fort Vancouver, it was for want of one to put in his place that he was not sent across. He was very much annoyed himself & grumbles like a Chief Factor. I dont know whether W^m will tell you that Dug^d had made a formal demand for additional salary for keeping the accounts of Puget Sound Comp^y as well as those connected with the Fur trade. The Gov^r he says was very willing but D^r MacLoughlin who has charge over there resisted & Dug^d was refused. He is very indignant as he toils like a slave & they say is much more efficient than any one they have had in his situation. Besides D^r MacLoughlin has £500 a year for superintending the Puget concern & his ignorant son² has £30 for some sinecure, the D^r has his double share of the Fur profits besides & every one complains of his mismanagement. There is a universal spirit of discontent all over & even Hargrave has begun to feel angry at times. They gave the Factorship he had expected to an old useless man³ on the Columbia to

¹Alexander Caulfield Anderson (1814-1884), born in India, was a cousin of Sir James Outram. For biography see Rich, *McLoughlin letters, second series*, pp. 384-6.

²David McLoughlin. *Ibid.*, pp. 395-6.

³Archibald McDonald (1790-1853). In this matter the Earl of Selkirk was

please Earl Selkirk who supported him, but M^r Finlayson writes it will be hard if we dont get it next season from w^{ch} we infer that it is pretty secure at last. Capⁿ Herd told me that it is alleged that the Gov^r is not in such favour with the Directors as he was & has not the same influence. Many are leaving the Service, old & young & going to Upper Canada— Even M^r Gladman with his 7 half breed children has purchased land & is now in communication with a Colonel Frazer having written home to ask what they will give him for his Commission. He was completely sickened by a letter from the Sec^y saying that Chief Traders c^d only draw on the Comp^y for £200, as their share for last year & M^r Gladman says it will be much worse soon. Willie and Dug^d are always sure of their £100 a year, & W^m is hoarding, I rather think at Gladmans instigation, that he may have money if he wishes to leave the service & sees an opening elsewhere— The double share used to be from one thousand to eleven hundred pounds & many people say that the falling off is caused by the Columbia & Red River speculations. They got out a steamer¹ & now find she is too small, so they are to have a very large one & the old one sold to who ever will buy her.

Willie & Hargrave had short letters from Uncle John. He seems very much dispirited² & tells W^m that he has not heart to make arrangements for going home as you propose at present, but he will some time. They say he is a great deal thinner, but still too large for his own comfort. M^r Robertson³ who took him prisoner at Fort W^m⁴ long ago, & with whom none of the North Westers were friends had his neck broken by upsetting his carriage in Montreal. He was representative of the district of the Lake of 2 Mountains & lived on the charity of the gentlemen

evidently rewarding McDonald for services to his father. See Rich, *Simpson's Athabasca journal*, pp. 448-9.

¹The *Beaver* is indicated. A. C. Anderson probably brought this news from the Columbia (see Rich, *McLoughlin letters, second series*, p. xiv), as he felt so strongly on the matter that he wrote Governor Simpson a private letter touching it (*ibid.*, pp. xix-xx).

²His wife, Catherine Turner, had died in 1841. He married again in 1843 (see p. 156.)

³Colin Robertson. See Rich, *Simpson's Athabasca journal*, pp. 461-3.

⁴McTavish was taken prisoner at Grand Rapids in June, 1819.

in this country who have to give £100 a year to a M^r Clerk,¹ and poor Robertson had the same. Neither were creditable characters. M^r R. died in Winter last, but Clerk is still at Montreal & his house is notorious for high play— I rather fear that Uncle plays, no one ever said for money, but I have an idea that he loses, at least when Hargrave told me of his wife's death, it was plain that he thought she had been a check. M^r Gladman passed last winter in Canada & he says Uncle was constantly in Montreal & very fond of society— The children had a governess, Miss Grant but he said she was exceedingly young. He is oldest Factor now & a great number of his juniors are leaving the service. I believe M^r Charles is the oldest & richest & they say he has £30,000 & the character of a notorious miser. He appears settled at Red River I suppose from economy—

I had letters from M^{rs} Webster who has gone to S^t Andrews partly for the education of her younger boys & also that they may be near their Scotch place & relations. Her ship letter is written in great distress as she had just lost her youngest son who died of violent inflammation in the wind pipe. She was quite devoted to her children & toiled with them anxiously. I believe she had reason, as her own brothers were very bad & indeed disowned by their family, while M^r Websters were anything but reputable. M^{rs} Finlayⁿ told me this & one of them deranged who lived with his keeper in M^{rs} Websters house for several years after she was married. Willie had 2 letters from D^r Tolmie, they became very gracious here, both being what ordinary people call dreamers, w^{ch} Dug^d is not. They are much bent on the improvement of human nature & are phrenologists & adherents of Combe, author of the Constitution of Man. Tolmie has had opportunities of judging for himself & for want of other means W^m has made himself acquainted with the notions of every one who has got into difficulties with Church or State for being too far in advance of the world. I suppose this has made the D^r think more of W^m than of Dugald, but their general character is equal, Willie being considered the greatest & hardest worker as well as having the best head. Dugald is a distinguished voyageur & driller of unruly men but he appears to be a good accomptant too—as they say the Columbia papers were never before in such order as since he

¹John Clarke. See Rich, *Simpson's Athabasca journal*, pp. 433-5.

went. M^r Gladman always speaks of W^m as on a par with himself & he is undoubtedly the most eminent quill driver they have.

The prisoner was released & sent off to Ungava Hudsons Straits, in pity— He had never been farther than the length of his short fetters for a year, & when he got out he c^d scarcely walk & had forgotten all his French— He came quite briskly to take leave, & shook hands with Joseph & me as if he had been a Methodist preacher. Hargrave made a speech to him explaining that it was from kind motives that he was not sent back to the plains as the white people there w^d have annoyed him. He was satisfied at not going, but defended himself vehemently for killing the man, & if I might judge from his gestures he w^d have had great pleasure in doing it again. His friends on the Saskatchewan were much exasperated, & altho' they have settled down, M^r Evans says that several of them declare that if he does not return safe, they will make *pemmican* of some one— Indeed M^r Harriott¹ mentioned that he had sent 2 white men away on a trip that would keep them 25 days, but 50 had elapsed before he left his post to come here & there had been no tidings of them, & he seemed very sure that the poor wretches had been destroyed.

I suspect there is something not very likely to be agreeable to the people in this country in the Wesleyan reports this year, as M^r Evans has not given us one tho Hargrave asked it, & last season they were poked at us by the q^r of a hundred. It is not M^r Evans, I am sure as it is his policy when he cant say what is favorable to hold his tongue, but some of his young preachers I daresay have been inveighing or complaining, & very ill [on] their part it is. There must be some reason as Evans admits that he has the reports & he presented us with a pamphlet written by D^r Alder on the rise & fall of Wesleyan Missions, I mean rise & progress. They have got a college of Jesuits among the Blackfeet, & the Comp^y have given M^r Blanchette² the head, £100 a year,

¹John Edward Harriott (1797-1866), had been at York, having been in charge of the Saskatchewan brigade. For biography see Rich, *Robertson's letters*, pp. 216-17.

²François Norbert Blanchette. Hargrave to Christie, December 1, 1842: "Mons. Blanchette has been extremely useful & very successful in counteracting the plans of the Yankees among our retired servants. Sir George is highly pleased with him." For biography see Rich, *McLoughlin letters, second series*, p. 165.

whether as a retaining fee, that he may keep the Indians as *we* wish them, or because they wish well to him & his labors, I cant say but I think the former. Mon^r Blanchette is an excellent old man who appears to mind his own affairs, while the Episcopal missionaries here attend only to other peoples. M^r Smithurst¹ Red River goes about rechristening Indians & children who had been baptized by M^r Evans, while the Wesleyans revile the Roman Catholic Clergy of the Settlement, & there was no minister left in it but old M^r Cochran, all the others having retired to combat each other amongst the Indians, 4 Catholics to I dont know how many Episcopal— M^r Evans says his instructions are to go only where there is no minister of another sect, but the others hate him with all their heart. He has been busy making a tin canoe² all the time he has been here. It looks very stylish but I dont know how it will paddle. Last year he was occupied in making an American despatch [box] w^{ch} he says is a perfect utensil, & when he returns to Norway H^e he is to begin a printing press, w^{ch} he seems to have no doubts about being able to construct & then he is to publish at a great rate.³

The only gentleman passenger who came by the ship is a M^r Peers⁴ from London. He is a clerk & is to winter here. He had letters both from old M^r & Lady Simpson, saying his father Capⁿ Peers was an old friend of M^r Simpsons & that his brother⁵ who is at Lachine gave great satisfaction to M^r Keith &c. which is more than M^r Keith gives to M^r Peers, as he is dying to get away from him & come to the North. Hargraves father was well when the packet left Canada. M^{rs} MacPherson the minister's wife had died. A cousin of the husband called MacPherson⁶

¹The Reverend John Smithurst was the first Protestant missionary to the Indians in Rupert's Land. His mission was at St. Peter's, Red River Settlement. See Margaret Arnett MacLeod, "The lamp shines in Red River" (*The Beaver*, September, 1936, pp. 41-5, 65-6).

²See introduction, p. lxxi.

³See F. L. Barber, "James Evans and the Cree Syllabic" (*Victoria Library Bulletin*, Toronto, July, 1940).

⁴Augustus Richard Peers was born about 1823, entered the service in 1842, served at York Factory, 1842-3; at Fort Simpson, 1843-4; in charge of Fort Norman, 1844-7; in charge of Peel River Post (Fort McPherson), 1847-53. He died at Peel River on March 15, 1853. See also introduction, pp. lxix-lxx.

⁵Henry Newsham Peers. See Rich, *McLoughlin letters, third series*, pp. 318-20.

⁶Andrew McPherson, a clerk in the service.

was here in summer I asked him what her name had been but all he knew was that she was from Rosshire that her husband is from the same county, that they were young, & the minister little above thirty & an establishment one too, that is in connection with the church of Scot. so that he could not have been the man at the Big hill, long ago, as we thought— It was only the wife who knew you. My informant is a very nice old man—he retired this year & went to Canada where he has a number of relations of weight his brother in law M^r MacLean is an officer of the Crown, I forget the title he has—

Hargrave has just told me that he finds he will not be able to get time to thank M^r Loudoun for getting the books, & bids me write to M^{rs} L so I opened her letter but it was full & I did not like to say much in case she c^d not read it, & I have not time to write another— Will y^u tell him that he is much pleased with D'Aubignes work, also that he has so many books now that we have not room for them & he is not going to order more if he can refrain. At any rate not this year & the little balance M^r L. mentions will be required for those y^u are getting. What is wanting of it he will pay either to him or you as may be arranged.

The last boats have been so late this year that every one has been hurried, M^r Gladman has been here since July packing furs, he is to take charge at Oxford H^e this Winter, M^r Clouston having been taken to Red River— M^r Harding at Churchill has taken Hargraves advice to remain for two years longer & see what is likely to happen. He has been a clerk since Harg^{ve} came into the country & wished to retire in despair. Harg^{ve} is to represent his services w^{ch} have been great tho it seems others have taken the credit & reaped the benefit of them— He saved the life of the deceased M^r Robertson, when attacked by a bear & in so doing shattered his hand which is maimed for life. M^r R. who was in charge at Churchill immediately after took the merit of having saved the whole furs when the ship was driven back & passed the Winter there, was commended by their honors, while it was poor Hardings work altogether, M^r R. having been absent till spring.

I wrote Mama that I expected to get a girl the daughter of respectable $\frac{1}{2}$ breeds to keep Joseph. But her mother sends word that she is only 9 & w^d be more apt to get another into mischief

than be any guard. They are such a set of wretches that I cannot take one of the Indians into the house, but he is so knowing & strong that I do not care very much at present, & we will perhaps hear of some decent girl next year, but MacKay said there was no one he c^d venture to recommend.

I suppose Hargrave has written you by this time I very seldom see him he is so busy. When he does come for a minute, Joseph attacks him, for they are still great friends, indeed better than ever, for they only meet when Bep is in good humour & before he never got [free from] squalling in peace night or day. The nursery is fairly built after all & will be habitable in a few days—I am told there is not such a room in the country & it certainly is very solid & even neat, & completely sheltered from the north by the kitchen, the West by the Mess room & the east by a double wall & the pickets— It has 4 windows & the only exposure south 2 light closets & a stove for cooking. Harg^{ve} was very nervous about building it as our house is larger than M^r Chief Factor Ross' & he has 8 or 9 children, but their liking a hubbub was no reason for my doing it & I asked very pressingly & at last he yielded & has had great satisfaction in it already.

I put Mamas letter outside [yours]¹ in case y^u may be from home & am ever my dear Papa

Y^r m^o affec. daughter

L. HARG^{VE}

36. TO FLORENCE MACTAVISH

Y. F. 9th Sept^r '42

My dear Flora

I received y^r long letter on the 7th Augst and was much distressed at not having l by the ship, as I fear y^u must have been very ill when y^u did not write. I need not say how much I hope y^u are now well, or how much I shall weary to hear about y^u. I presented y^r present to Beppo & assure y^u he is much interested in the contents as well as the case itself.

Since I wrote Polly's letter the boats from *Portage la Loche* have arrived & the furs will all be on board tomorrow & I shall

¹In order to save weight, Letitia seldom used an envelope.

have to close my letters. M^r Hopkins¹ who came as Secre^{ty} to Sir George, left him in California I believe & returned to go by our ship. He is or was a "reporter" but is as different from what I had imagined a Parliamentary reporter to be as can be conceived. He seems 23 or 24, very dandified or rather peculiar in his style of dress & uncommonly nice looking, but with a volubility of speech that I never heard equalled, & a willingness to communicate what he knows that surprised me, who am used to such reserve. He [gives] sketches of Dugald, with whom he appears to have been prodigiously great. He says D. begins work at 4 A M, & leaves off at 11 at night the whole year round. Fort Vancouver has Yankee missionaries in it, & on Sunday morn^s they dont breakfast till 9—so that D. gets a rest & time to think & amuse himself, w^{ch} he does by singing voyageur songs. Hopkins was in a room & heard the missionaries praying & singing hymns, before he got up, & a loud & curious chanting w^{ch} he did not know whether to suppose vocal or instrumental, but at last he rose & went to examine & found the noise came from D's apartment w^{ch} was next to the poor missionaries the division being wood. On going in there lay our brother singing said voyageur songs with his head under the blankets, & this is his pastime every Sunday morn^s from 6 till 9— He says he is sometimes very serious & at others speaks in the wildest manner. He gives a hideous account of Miss Turner Aunt John's sister who was staying with them when the Gov^r & he passed 18 months ago. He says she was a perfect vinegar cask & impertinent to Uncle & his poor wife even in company. I presume she had not spared him either as he was

¹Edward Martin Hopkins was the son of Martin Edward Hopkins, a London businessman, and his wife Ann Manley, an heiress of Devonshire. He entered the Company's service in 1841 as personal secretary and assistant to Sir George Simpson. He was now returning to England, having accompanied Sir George as far as the Hawaiian Islands on his world tour. From 1847 onwards, Hopkins was appointed for "general service" at Lachine. He was appointed a chief trader in 1847, and a chief factor in 1854; and his last years in the service were spent in charge of the Montreal agency. He retired in 1870. He married in Canada Anne, daughter of Captain Isaac Ogden, and niece of Peter Skene Ogden. After her death in London in the eighteen-fifties he married, about 1858, the well-known artist, Frances Ann Beechy, daughter of Rear Admiral Frederick William Beechy. For the information on his parentage and second marriage I am indebted to Dr. Grace Lee Nute, Curator of Manuscripts, Minnesota Historical Society.

very unreserved in his abuse of her, & praised the 2 children very much as well as their father & mother. The letter I had from Lady Simpson, was only signed by herself. She had had a dangerous attack of inflammation & was not able to sit up when the ship sailed. Her life had been despaired of for several days after her baby's birth, from the same thing, but when the express left in Feb^y she was pretty well & nursing herself. The child's name is Augusta, she does not say a word about the poor baby. I hope she has recovered [from] her last illness as well. The Gov^r it seems is not expected till 6 weeks after M^r Hopkins hopes to reach Londⁿ.

The mosquito tribe had a very short season, but they were mighty virulent while they did exist. They were particularly fond of poor Beppo who had more than once an eye quite shut up or his hands & feet swelled cruelly with large lumps on his head. I hung a piece of cloth dipt in turpentine & washed his hands in it & I think he escaped better— When he was a baby I watched hard & I dont remember his having more than 2 bites w^{ch} were on his head & made thro' a cap so that they were nothing, but this year when he was running about it was different. He has got so very fond of me these last 2 or 3 weeks that I am a good deal bothered as his way of patronizing me is not what is most agreeable one mode being to thump my forehead with a drum stick & laugh at the noise it makes. He always lies for upwards of a $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour after he goes to bed & listens to stories as gravely as papa reads. If I stop or speak to Marg^t he rages, but as long as he hears of Charley Cram eat too much jam &c. or Timothy Gay went out one day, he is perfectly still & in time drops asleep. I am surprised at Mamas not liking the name of Beppo. It is the Italian contraction & if she saw him she w^d admit that he is not a boy that will get the full name of Joseph & I hate the thoughts of Joe. The people giggled hard at 1st but here they are accustomed to it now.

It is two full years since we came here & all that time I have not been 4 miles away from the Fort. How much longer we are to remain I have no idea & except for hearing from home I dont care but if he [Joseph] lives he must go home in 5 years & if I live, I hope I will have the courage to send him if I cant go myself. We have furlough every 7 years so that I hope Hargrave will

avail himself, if we are kept here so long. M^r Gladⁿ tells me he thinks we will only be other three but it is all his own surmise. Harg^{ve} thinks W^m will succeed [him] & if he does I will advise him to ask leave to go home. Altho' we sh^d have to stay another year & he impoverish himself, it w^d be impoverishment at any rate, for he w^d spend all he had, & better do so when he had only his clerks savings than after a few years laboring as Chief Trader & hard work the man has of body & mind who has charge of York. If it were only the fear of its taking fire, the anxiety w^d be intolerable to me, & it appears miraculous that it does not, they are so careless. There are frequent slight conflagrations but they dont tell Harg^{ve} of them. The last was Beiths work shop taking fire but they got it stifled in every respect & *we* only found it out accidentally some time after.

I was astonished to hear of the Hamiltons expectation of getting boarders on the terms proposed. Mary says she wonders at Miss Buchans good spirits her father having left her very little & her youngest brother being "ill doing" but altho' Georgina is afflicted, yet she is easily amused & cheerful & poor Mary says that she cant without great exertion & some extraordinary excitement get up her spirits at all. When Thomas Simpson died he had just got a Commission, w^{ch} was afterwards given his younger brother Alexⁿ who had rushed home from the Sandwich Isles on hearing of Toms death. I think he must be a little cracked as he has either retired from the service or has thrown up his commission, I cant ascertain w^{ch}. If the former he will have a $\frac{1}{2}$ share for 7 years, or a sum of money from the Directors, according to what they expect the 7 years share will be, if he has thrown it up he gets nothing. He had been a clerk 13 years. They are an ill fated family as the eldest killed himself in Scot^d & Tom here, & a step brother² died on the Columbia— I believe he was drowned poor man, so that of the 3 who were expected to get on so well in the service no one has succeeded & I really think that poor Alexander must be deranged from the way he has gone on since his brothers death.

I wish I c^d just get home for 24 hours, I w^d not ask to see a

¹Alexander Simpson. For biography see Rich, *McLoughlin letters, second series*, pp. 404-6.

²Emilius Simpson. For biography see Fleming, *Minutes of Council*, pp. 454-5.

soul but y^r selves & I think I w^d come away contentedly— I hope poor Mary Jane is well & that her husband maintains his great character. You mentioned that M^{rs} Fleming intended to write, but as I got no letter I suppose she changed her mind. M^{rs} Worsley gives an interesting description of Miss Ellen Astley's husband. She tells me that she writes Willie & sends "Chambers" but no letter nor paper came having been too late. I must not forget to tell you that the Feb^y letters were all too late for the Spring packet & were sent forward *solus* by a different steamb^t. However they reached Lachine in time for the canoes— Had they been any later they w^d either have been sent back to England or kept a year in Canada, as they w^d not have sent them to the States, by whose means we hear, when our express comes from the *Sault St Marie*. The letters are never secure after the 26th Feb^y on w^{ch} day they must be in Londⁿ & it is best to send the ship letters there as they speak of dropping Orkney & we have agents at Lerwick & Stornaway. D^r Cowie has got the agency at Lerwick & has sent us a host of Shetlanders. The regulation appears to be that the ship sails from Gravesend on the 1st Sunday of June, but is tugged by steam from Londⁿ some days before. It will not make much difference to y^u writing a few days earlier, & will be more safe. Chambers Journals have been twice too late, but I dont think he told M^{rs} Worsley last time—

I have not had time to read any thing but the Argus since the ship came, & will not for awhile as I have a great deal to do in the sewing way. I am become a perfect working machine what with Beppos growing so often & my own & Harg^{ves} things. I work from 8 in the morn^g till 8 at night, & have all the winters furniture to prepare. I have got out some beautiful fine plaid for frocks & gaiters (knitted) with leather straps reaching to his [Joseph's] stomach so that I wont put him into breeks. The children here all look so curious wearing trowsers as soon as they can walk & the people think me very queer for not putting him into them. It is not for the cold they do it, as girls or even ladies dont wear drawers, merely leggins of cloth embroidered with beads, fastened by a garter under the knee & worn too in place of stockings for they use socks of white duffle, or rather a kind of blanket & unless with English shoes they never have a regular stocking on their feet. I dont think any of them can knit.

Betsy & her husband went away to cross the Rocky Mountains in July. I have got the stores man's wife who is very decent for a washerwoman but she is such a drone that I am waiting for an opportunity to change her for a new wife who has just come in to the Fort & has all the energy of all the tribe in her— Madame Squirrel is nursery scrubber & Bep calls her *Cucum*—Indian for grand mother. Her husband is a cripple & she supports him & her 2 boys by fishing & snaring. She comes from a distance of 7 miles in a canoe every Satur^y & often brings 300 fish, for which she gets salt geese pease &c. & for washing or working she gets materials for clothing themselves. Joseph hates them & imagines *cucum* to mean something obnoxious but so they call themselves when they wish him to be gracious. He gets quite desperate when the very old wives kiss him & roars with fear & horror & really they look most unearthly. The men & children he gets on with but he is not polite to old ladies & they poor sinners feel his dislike very acutely. He has been bothered by seeing so many gentlemen of late. He sits staring & when old M^r Rhoderick M^cKenzie¹ was in I was kept in misery by his sitting with his mouth as round as O exclaiming *oh oh* at his cock eye & fretting to get to him that he might feel what was wrong. Poor Rorie shut it fairly at last & I had to send Fattie away.

Tell me next letter whether y^u can read my letters, perhaps red is worse than black ink and if y^u have much difficulty in making them out. I was alarmed to hear that Miss E. MacLaverty had been married. By good luck assassination is cheap in Italy so that the man or his children must be poor if they cant afford a Bravo—a consideration. Miss Smith asks me again to write to her & I have done it. I have now only Mamas letter to finish. I will keep it open as long as I can, but I am sure it will be sent on board to morrow. There is a party going on board with Harg^{ve} I was not asked— The ship is anchored about 6 miles from this & unloaded by 2 schooners. There are 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -breeds going home, a boy to school & a grown *youth*² to study for the Church. I suppose they are not very genteel as they have not been brought to me. Polly & y^u need not scorn the $\frac{1}{2}$ sheet for I am sure it is

¹Roderick McKenzie, known as "Senior." See introduction, p. liii.; and Rich, *Simpson's Athabasca journal*, pp. 453-4.

²A. K. Isbister. See introduction, p. lxxii.

well crammed. Give my love to all the boys & believe me ever
dear Flora

Y^{rs} m^o affec^y

L. HARGRAVE

I had a letter from Lock^t & sent the answer.

37. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

York Factory 2nd [to 9th] December 1842

My dear Mama

The packet is to start on the tenth so I think it is as well to begin my letter in time in case of accidents— We have all been well since the ship sailed,¹ w^{ch} she did not do for nearly 48 hours after the packet & passengers went on board. We had a pleasant enough fall but the winter has set in with great rigor & threatens to be very severe as regards cold & snow, which beat all I have yet seen so early in the season. Beppo sneezes hard but goes often out in the carriage with Marg^t as I cant venture there being as yet no track made & the chances of upsetting being numerous. He is quite able bodied now & struts about with rabbit skins in his trowsers without shrinking from the coldest wind to w^{ch} he has been exposed. Fully fatter & very strong & tall—indeed he is quite square. Fortunately he needs no nursing & is never on a persons knee, can mount a chair himself & come safely over his bed, speaks fluently, but the language is almost entirely of his own devising, for instance he calls a candle a *hot* because it burns him, a bird is an *awa* for it flies off, a key he names a *pilnum* w^{ch} means Wilson, as he is constantly flaunting about the Fort with a number. I believe he has got all his teeth now, those that were plaguing him when I wrote were cut immediately after, & he got quite well.

Willie continues well, he is rather low just now in consequence of losing a very fine Yankee fox trap, his own property. The D^r & he took to trapping, as foxes are very abundant. They started every morn^g at 5 & it took hard walking to enable them to be home for breakfast at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 8, often with a fox in their bag but a few nights ago W^m was in here & Hargrave & he had herrings,

¹September 15.

after them a dram of whiskey to kill thirst, & finally a bottle of champagne. Willie said at the time that he w^d oversleep himself & lose his walk w^{ch} actually proved the case & on running out to Nelson river to look at his trap the next day, he saw no traces of it but an Indian caught a beautiful old cross fox without the foot during the day w^{ch} had been trapped & had run away with the machine & lost it so that poor W^m could neither get fox nor snare. I have got a beautiful collar to my Martin tippet. One of the 3 skins is a prodigy. M^r Sinclair on his way here found an Indian preparing to make a medicine bag of it & made him yield it up. Hargrave could not let it pass, so he bought it & made Wilson select the two nearest it in blackness so that it is a good size. He has also given me nearly 60 ermine skins a white fox muff a new lynx boa so that I am well skinned. The beauty of the white fox is extraordinary like snow, & very long in the hair, clear white, but it is not half so valuable as the black or silver one. Harg^{ve} intimated that any Indian bringing 3 black or silver foxes sh^d get either a blanket shawl or a tartan gown for his squaw. M^r Wilson does not expect that 2 persons will gain the reward. The D^r has already got upwards of 6 cross & red foxes but no black or silver ones. They have to surrender every skin they get & I believe they get about the value of a lb. of tobacco in return, unless for the very fine kinds, w^{ch} if I am rightly informed bring 5/- Otters (land ones) sold last year for £1/13 at the house in London & here anyone who needs a cap will have to pay that & 20 per cent additional. Willie Harg^{ve} & I are the only ones who have them as the other gentlemen content themselves with beaver & M^r Hamilton¹ was obliged by H. to take a black bear skin till he got rich. I made Beppo a silk hood to come well over his face & stuffed it with down like a bustle. It is lighter & warmer than fur & protects his face much better than a cap.

We have not heard a syllable from any one, not even from M^{rs} Gladman who is only 200 miles distant & the soonest will be on the 12th January when the bearers of this may be back again from Norway House. It will be carried on foot at least to Sault St Marie & I believe the Yankees carry it in the same way during a fortnights march. I had expected that there would be news of me by this time as I am fully prepared and on Friday last I was

¹See introduction, p. lx.

threatened a little but since that I have got on as if nothing uncommon were in prospect. Much as I hate the affair I wish it w^d take place, as Hargrave thinks he will be tempted to keep the packet for a day or two that you may hear the result & as the Red River people are grumbling already at not getting their express forwarded till ours can go with it there will be a disturbance if they lose a few days for private ends, & they may not get answers by return of the ship so that I will do my best to make him send off the very day that there may be no reflections.

I suspect that if they possibly can get the Finlaysons will be off by the ship next year— Even M^{rs} Potter tells Marg^t that they have plans but bids her tell no one, in case they may not manage. There are only 4 berths so that by the time the lady & gentlemen passengers are lodged Marg^{ts} quarters are not likely to be so good as when we came, but that is her look out. I can hear of no one coming, so I hope the poor sinner who is to replace her will have her choice of the cabins & I told Capⁿ Herd that a woman was coming so that I think he will look after her. I often feel for the trouble it must put y^u to— Marg^t has never said another word, I do not know whether she goes willingly or not, but she declared it was solely in obedience to her father & W^m & Hargrave maintain that he has a want, as his plea is that he & his family are starving & for God's sake let us all starve together. These are his words & very queer ones they appear to me. I dont think she will take very well with it but perhaps matters are not so bad as he calls them.

Old Garson the cook has not poisoned any one as yet, but his dirtiness is remarkable.¹ He would never ask to do anything but carry water from the river wherefore Joseph calls him *Theg* as he considers his buckets the same as the kegs that are used for all purposes here. Gibault & Theg fight a good deal but we are not disturbed by their altercations now. Garson is only 46 & has saved £300 after 27 years service on £17 a year. Hargrave says that Dugald has about the same sum in the Company's hands. I dont think he will save much of this years having sent home orders for the most extraordinary finery w^{ch} M^r Hopkins is to bring next Spring. It seems that the young gentlemen at Vancouver are a very lawless set. D^r Tolmie being the only

¹See introduction, p. cxi.

regularly steady one, I mean in the way of frolicking & mischief & he is detested by one & all & accused of tale bearing, but as W^m says intimate as he was he never heard a hint from the poor D^r, while M^r Hopkins who was their confederate & boon companion spoke of nothing but their exploits, running Tolmie down & telling upon them without any proof but that he did not join them in their proceedings. Among other things they are not allowed to ride on Sunday but may walk as much as they please. A day or 2 before Hopkins left they got an Indian to provide horses & all sallied out apparently to take a sober walk, but one of the poor horses died while they were racing him and next day the treacherous old Indian marched into the Fort & complained to D^r MacLoughlin telling him all their plots & devices— The D^r said very little but they will not be able to repeat their exercises again.

There are to be great changes brought about in the country in June but Hargrave seems certain that he will not be sent from York. We have not heard whether he is to go to Red River to the next Meeting of Council. I dont care very much whether or not he gets leave as he will be very glad himself if he goes & I will be very glad if he does not, so that I will have the satisfaction of either being pleased myself or of seeing him so. M^r Gladman said the Gov^r w^d not let him seeing there is no commissioned gentⁿ but himself & if anything were going wrong either in business or a disaster, it w^d be ruin to Willie who w^d be in charge & of course have plenty to blame him. A place was burned inland where all the goods intended for the trade of one of Harg^{ves} posts were destroyed, but no blame has been attached to the one who had charge, I believe it was my friend M^r MacKay. It was not the post itself merely a cache or something of that kind that caught fire.¹

5th Dec^r I have waited for some days & nothing has happened. Harg^{ve} has begun to seal his papers & W^m says he will be ready to close the packet on the 9th. He has got another trap & caught a white fox.

¹Finlayson to Hargrave, December 17, 1842; "The fire which destroyed that part of the Island Lake Outfit as was deposited on an Island in the Knee Lake originated, I am told, from the carelessness of the Oxford freight boat's crew who breakfasted at the c  che and left the fire unextinguished when they took their departure."

Harg^{ve} had a letter handed to him lately which on opening he found Sir— As we feel our health rather on the decline we hope Y^u will allow us Satur^y afternoon to take exercise. As the Comp^y allow their clerks 2 entire days in the week, we do not see how they can refuse a few hours to respectable tradesmen signed Beith & MacKay tinsmiths— No notice was taken of this document by Harg^{ve} but M^r Wilson spoke to MacKay & he said that Beith had asked him to join & he was very sorry he had been so foolish. He only came out last ship time & is not quite grown up yet. I am sure Tinnie [Beith] will revile us all, as Willie threatened to thrash him for mutinous conduct in the Fall. It is remarkable how ready gentlemen are with their hands here.¹ Hargrave beat Houston our last cook & M^{rs} Gladman told me that when Dugald was here he had done the same while Willie was engaged in belaboring Crosbie. Dug^d heard the noise & on going in found Houston trying to rescue him so he attacked Houston & there they drubbed the insolence out of them.

They are establishing a new post on Vancouver Island. Dug^d was very anxious to go with M^r Douglass² as accomptant & to leave the D^r but it is doubtful whether one will be in time to take his old place. M^r Douglass is a *mulatto* son of the renowned M^r Douglass of Glas^{ow}. He is a Chief Factor on the Columbia & very much respected & liked by old & young. If Dugald does not go a M^r Anderson who was here in summer will, he is a would be literary gentleman, writes letters to the Times, & bothers the Hon^{ble} Co^y a good deal by their contents. Some years ago he was here & exhibited on the platform with a journal he had got from his brother³ at Moose reading to a party of dandies &

¹Even Sir George himself beat his people. See Frederick Merk, *Fur trade and empire* (Cambridge, Mass., 1931), p. 144; Rich, *McLoughlin letters, second series*, pp. 175-6.

²Letitia's statement about James Douglas's parentage agrees with that of other contemporaries of Douglas. Governor Simpson calls him "a Scotch West Indian" (Character Book of 1832, H. B. C. Arch. 34/2, fos. 23d.-24); and Thomas Simpson says he was "born, I believe, in the West Indies." (Alexander Simpson, *The life and travels of Thomas Simpson, the Arctic discoverer*, London, 1845, p. 84). For biography see Rich, *McLoughlin letters, third series*, pp. 309-14.

³James Anderson (b. 1812) entered the Hudson's Bay Company's service in 1831 at Moose Factory. He was in the Lake Huron District at least during 1839-41. He married Margaret, daughter of Roderick McKenzie, Senior, in

bragging of the number of Indians he had shot as if he had been speaking of white partridges. After all it was not the brother who killed or at least ought to have killed them as Uncle John sent a M^r Swanston¹ with a party & if M^r A. was there it was without authority & must have been as an amateur. The Indians had cut off a whole post belonging to Uncles district, murdered men women & children.² There was a governor Pelly³ in Red River with his wife, & on the occasion of the Indian fisherman not bringing their fish in proper condition, M^r P— wound up a long speech at him, by saying that altho' not punished in this world for such conduct he w^d assuredly suffer in the next.⁴ This was the same gentleman who made the hair of the Comp^y stand on end by asking Uncle John for a *pot de chambre*. Uncle indignantly told him to go to the servants & every one was appalled at such a liberty being taken with a Chief Factor.

9th Dec^r I must finish at last as all the papers are ready—

1839. He served at Lake Nipegon, 1846-51, and at Fort Simpson in the Mackenzie River District, 1851-7. He became a chief trader in 1847, and a chief factor in 1855; and in 1855 he headed the Anderson-Stewart expedition in search of Sir John Franklin. He retired in 1857, but re-engaged in 1858, when he was put in charge at Mingan for a year or more. He died on October 16, 1867. See A. C. Anderson, *History of the north west coast* (British Columbia Archives); Women's Historical Society, *Transaction* no. 20 (Toronto, 1919-20); E. H. Oliver, "An almost forgotten search for Franklin" (*Daily Phoenix*, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, December 14, 1911, supplement, historical section, p. 3).

¹John Swanston was born about 1802, and entered the service in 1820. He served at various posts in the Lake Superior District from about 1826 to 1854, first as clerk in charge, and after 1842 as a chief trader. He was made a chief factor in 1854, and transferred to the Northern Department. He retired on June 1, 1858. For a short time, before his retirement, and while awaiting William Mactavish's arrival to take over, he was in charge of Fort Garry; and his management was such that Mactavish called him "a pig headed curse." Swanston married a daughter of George Keith.

²The Hannah Bay massacre of 1831. See W. S. Wallace (ed.), *Notes of a twenty-five years' service in the Hudson's Bay territories, by John McLean* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1932), pp. 98-101. John George McTavish and John Swanston were highly praised for the prompt measures they took in bringing the murderers to justice. Hargrave to McMurray, August 17, 1832; Hargrave to E. Smith, December 5, 1832.

³Robert Parker Pelly (b. 1790), governor of Assiniboia, 1823-5, first cousin of Sir John Henry Pelly, governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1822-52.

⁴For a variation of this story see A. Ross, *The Red River Settlement* (London, 1856), pp. 76-7.

Harg^{ve} delayed writing to papa thinking he w^d have tidings of me— Yesterday & today he has not been well with headache & cold, & if I am well the packet will start before day light to morrow morn^g but if there appears any chance he will keep it till Monday. I have felt uncomfortable for 2 days but the D^r says I may be in this state for weeks— At any rate y^u will hear by the very first opportunity. I hope you are all well. I cannot bring myself to speak of Flora as there is nothing distressing that I have not imagined of her, & indeed more than her. I have written to no one but you. Harg^{ve} pressed W^m very hard to send y^u a letter but he said he had not a word to say. He was in last night & they had 2 tumblers of whisky toddy the 1st time I have seen more than one, since I came here for they are very abstemious in their own way.

The Indians here have the prospect of an abundant Winter, as it is called, for the partridges are very numerous, the D^r shot 16 at the Fort gate before 8 o clock & they delight in eating foxes & one man brought in 26 of their skins in one week, so that as he has no children I expect to hear that his wife & he have died of repletion on the occasion. One of our oxen fell down dead from drinking after hard working & was divided among the Indians. Old Saunders his lady & daughter finished a hind quarter in less than 2 days. We have got in 9 deer already & numbers of rabbits.

I am at as low an ebb for something so say as either Willie or Harg^{ve} can be. The latter is very much plagued with headaches in winter from never taking exercise & roasting over a fearful stove. All his spare moments now are spent with the fat boy whom he teazes considerably. He comes in before day light every morn^g & blows out the candle regularly an exploit that sometimes occupies them ten minutes, & after that he hands every article of dress in perfect order. I dont know whether it will continue but at present he is very quick and intelligent and good tempered. M^r Wilson declares that he is a miracle, and Margaret goes still farther, he is as fond of her as ever, but he has become much more dutiful to me than he used to be.

I saw a calculation of the skins that went home last Fall & after clearing off all expenses those of this department ought to bring a Chief Trader £250 & this is calculated as half, for the Southern department sh^d be at least equal, so that a Factor sh^d

have £1000 if they manage right at home & supposing Canada & the Columbia districts keep themselves. This will show that the falling off of shares is not caused by want of skins, but by mismanagement & in 3 years the profits will be prodigious as for a long time they have been preserving beaver & the hunters are to be let loose on them at that time & they are always valuable. There are great numbers in our district as Uncle John began to prevent their being hunted & ever since the plan has been followed. Others resisted as long as they could, but were at last prevented by a special law & if y^u only heard some old men who w^d like to make as large dividends as possible before retiring, how they grumble— D^r Todd¹ the great buffaloe tongue curer on Swan River is expected to go to MacKenzies River next season. He has a large family & will not like the change. I suppose he has not been good, & yet they say he is an excellent trader, but popular characters never appear to be sent to MacKenzies River & I think he must have got into disgrace with their honors.

There will be no opportunity of sending letters from Red River till about the middle of June & these letters must leave this place in Feb^y. Y^u will get them about the same time that you did last year. The Turkeys became somnolent when the cold set in & had to be brought into the kitchen where they are doing well. The Orkney geese thrive amazingly in the stable & are to be killed for the Holidays. The bacon ham is excellent, even M^r Wilson approves of it & he is the connoisseur of our mess. It is ludicrous to see him inspecting the jam can at tea time to ascertain whether it contains marmalade or strawberries or merely country produce before he commits himself by taking any. He is the derision of all & sundry but every one likes the poor man & he does not care in the least for being laughed at every time he opens his mouth. I must now leave off having delayed closing till the last moment. Harg^{ve} & W^m send kindest love & with the same from myself to you papa Polly Flora & the boys believe me ever
My dear Mama

Y^r m^o affec^{te} daughter

LETITIA HARGRAVE

¹William Todd (1784-1851). See Rich, *Simpson's Athabasca journal*, pp. 471-2. His burial record gives his age as sixty-four years, which does not agree with Rich.

38. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

York Factory 1st April 1843

My dear Mama

When I closed my letter on the 9th Decem altho' anxious & uneasy, I had little idea of the pain I now feel in writing to you again. Hargrave wrote papa the moment that my poor baby¹ was born, w^{ch} was about 2 on the 10th, & died on the 27th— I will try & tell you its sad history. Altho I think of it constantly I will never be able to write with composure. I became ill about midnight but was not regularly so till 8 in the morning, and till 12, was no worse than I had expected. After that, the suffering was fearful & almost continuous till after what seemed to me some difficulty on the D^{rs} part, the child was born. The delay had been caused by the navel cord being twisted round his neck, & when I looked the D^r was working with him & he was blue & had not breathed. When I saw the little chest move, I never as completely forgot myself, nor felt any thing like the gladness I did. It was very large & strong, much more so than Joseph was. I fear that my trials began with myself for my breasts got so sore that the irritation brought on a feverish attack & we had to get a nurse for awhile, for he drank so constantly that I c^d not get them properly treated. The girl had a thriving baby of her own w^{ch} she left with her sister. I was nervous about it, but they assured me there was no danger. After the 2nd day I nursed him at night myself but from having been ill & leaving off had not enough of milk & kept her. He continued well till the 24th when he kept wailing all day. The D^r thought there was nothing the matter as his pulse was good & he drank as usual. Next day he was better till night when I found that there was something fearfully wrong. The D^r came & said it was rupture. He reduced it easily & comforted me by saying that it was not dangerous in an infant. He said shortly after that there seemed to be a little inflammation & after a little hesitation put 2 leeches on his hand, he remained watching all day till 5 when he said the pulse was much calmer, breathing better, & bid me offer him a drink in a little, & call him if there was any change as he was tired from being up all night & w^d take a rest. Willie came in & assured me that the

¹William Hargrave.

complaint was so rapid that he must be recovering & told me that it was very common here that Munroes whole family were born with hernia & that men & boys of them were strong. He left me along with Hargrave quite satisfied that danger was over. The child on my knee, Marg^t lay down to hush Joseph & they fell asleep together— I felt babys hands rather cold about 9 & rose from the stove to get some more to put round him when shortly after he gave a sharp cry & Marg^t awoke. It was the first time he had cried for 8 hours & was so peculiar that she ran for Harg^{ve} & the D^r. I soon found that there was no hope. They took it from me & I only recollect thinking of every thing in the world but it till I saw Willie carry him out of the room, I dont know when. I asked the D^r next day if I had been too late of sending for him but he said no, he had done all he could, & hoped from several symptoms particularly by its bowels being very open, that it would have recovered. Poor Hargrave was terribly distressed, but he soon got well again. I thought I never [would]. The first thing that roused me was an attack of pains in the nerves like Tic Doloureux. I have lain for 36 hours without stirring or drawing my breath further than was absolutely necessary. This remained for a month & went off gradually. We have all been perfectly well for 6 weeks past, Beppo growing in mind & body. He has known all his large letters since the end of January and recites with great emphasis all the nursery rhymes he has an opportunity of acquiring. Poor thing he was so frightened & perplexed by the disappearance of his little brother. He used to come looking so bewildered to my bed side & look anxiously for it—None baby, none baby, poor Mama.

M^r Gladman wrote lately that his wife is ill & much confined to bed. She is in the family way & I fear there must be something far wrong when she takes to her bed— *Igneabitum* our old servant is with them at Oxford. He was last winter at Lac La Pluie with Nicol Finlayson. M^r Mason¹ the Methodist preacher is there, he baptized Igne at his own request by the name of George after M^r Gladman, but since that the said George has been useless, even the Gladmans allow it. They say he burns the fish he should fry standing in a cool corner praying aloud all the time.

We had a packet from the North a few weeks ago containing

¹The Reverend William Mason.

fearful tidings. At MacKenzie's River M^r Lee Lewes¹ writes that 2 of his men were killed & eat by a starving party of Indians, 2 women & a little boy, who had previously killed & eat their husbands & their other children— The men had both foolishly gone to sleep while travelling with a packet to Fort Good Hope & were knocked on the head & immediately devoured by these horrid women²—

D^r MacLoughlin's eldest son³ was shot by his white men, he was a clerk & had been trusted by his father with the charge of one of the Forts in the District we rent from the Russians. He had 23 men, who all deserted him, he went after them to the woods & was shot. The Gov^r reached the Fort in the course of his travels 2 days after, just in time to save the Fort from being pillaged by the Indians. He carried off the murderer to the Russian Fort Sitka & he was to be tried there. His men say that he drank & was such a savage for cruelty that no man could live under him, that he levelled his gun at a man who in self defence raised his & the shot took effect. Another account is that 15 of the men deliberately & at once levelled their guns at him. We will hear in June how the matter is settled. It is well known that he drank & was a most inhuman master. Willie says that among gentlemen no one could be more amiable & good humoured. He was a half

¹John Lee Lewes (1791-1872) was a son of Charles Lee Lewes, a noted actor at Covent Garden and Drury Lane in London, and in Edinburgh and Dublin, and his second wife, a Miss Rigley. John Lee Lewes's nephew, George Henry Lewes, and the latter's son, Charles Lee Lewes, achieved eminence in the world of letters; and Charles Lee Lewes became George Eliot's heir on her death in 1880. (*Dictionary of national biography*, vol. xxxiii, pp. 163-7). John Lee Lewes retired to the Red River in 1853 with his native wife and unmarried children, John and Nancy. His home was close by the famous church "St. Andrews on the Red" (see frontispiece of Healy, *Women of Red River*), and he was buried near the church entrance, where his gravestone has been a familiar sight for more than seventy years. For biography, see Rich, *Simpson's Athabasca journal*, pp. 446-7.

²Hargrave to Christie, March 31, 1843: "In McKenzie's River also, poor Lewes has his own troubles. Two of his men have been killed and *eaten* by the starving Natives of Fort Good Hope. Bell at Peels River is safe. The doubts regarding him had arisen from the continued absence of the poor Packet men."

³John McLoughlin (1812-1842). See Rich, *McLoughlin letters, second series*, pp. xxii-xlvi; 340-82; 396-7.

breed. Our Forth Street friend M^r Potts¹ brother was also shot thro' the head at a Fort of the Americans & the place pillaged but all this was done by Indians.

M^{rs} Ross had another little girl² lately. Little Fanny³ was so ill shortly before that her life had been despaired of, but as M^r Ross says nothing about her in his last letter, I suppose she has got well. We have at last got a girl who I think will do to keep Beppo. She is coming here by the boats. I weary to hear among other things whether you have got a servant for us—

No letters have come from Dugald, of course they say he will be across this summer but I have been too often disappointed, already. I heard from M^{rs} Finlayson in Jan^y & expect a packet every day. If you wrote in October or thereabouts I shall have a letter from you by it. The winter has been very severe as regards cold the glass being generally at this time from 20 to 30 below & sometimes even 36— The snow very deep & the ice on the river from 3 feet & a half to 4 feet in thickness. There will be a tremendous crashing if the river breaks up suddenly. We have never yet had a moments thaw altho every one is burned brown with the heat of the sun. Willie & M^r Peers are covered with freckles.

M^r Hargrave has given up all thoughts of going to the Meeting of Council at Red River. He has not got leave of absence from the Gov^r w^{ch} leaves us to suppose that he had not got home so soon as he expected as he was to send out despatches as soon as he got to Eng^d & none have yet come. I think Willie seems inclined to write but I dont know whether he will or not. He says what is true that it may not get to you till Sept^r & unless the ship winters here you will have letters in Octob^r or early Nov^r.

I was shocked at the death of the poor Duke of Orleans & the public letter from M^r Rowand on the Saskatchewan says that the Chinese had killed the British Ambassador. Alex^r Simpson

¹Tom Potts, a friend of the Hargraves in Edinburgh, who lived at the home of R. M. Ballantyne's widowed mother.

²The tenth child, Clementina, who did not live to grow up.

³Frances, ninth child in Donald Ross's family, like the daughters of a number of other people connected with the Hudson's Bay Company, was named after Lady Simpson. Frances Ross married the Honorable J. Curtis Bird, M.D. the son of Chief Factor James Bird; and after her death he married her sister Annabella, the widow of Henry McDermot.

(Toms brother) has begun business for himself in the Sandwich Islands & been cheated on the outset by a Yankee who has absconded taking with him ten thousand dollars belonging to *our* Company & what is worse five thousand of Alex^{rs} own, I suppose all he had in the world.¹

M^r Thew² a clerk is going home this year for having attempted to stab M^r Chief Factor MacDonnel with his carving knife at his own table. Hargraves protégé M^r Hamilton has turned out very bad too, poor boy. I cant tell y^u what I have felt for him, for Willie told me from the first what his habits & vices were, but I never told H. & it was only last Saturday that he began to suspect him— He is a confirmed blackguard, cool unfeeling & cowardly without the slightest feeling of shame as he lets the gentlemen tell him their opinion & call him horrid names without showing the least symptom of annoyance. Hargrave is resolved to get the Service rid of him. I held out long for him, but he has been here nearly 2 years, every one kind & setting him a good example. The only feelings he seems to have being envy & vindictiveness. He refused on Satur^y to obey Harg^{ves} orders & was obstinate & insolent, concluding by boasting of his courage to the others. What the end is to be I dont know, but Willie has dissuaded H. from reporting him to Council & disgracing him here, for the present. Poor boy, I feel such an inclination to speak to him as he writes with Harg^{ve} in this house, but I know he w^d just go out & entertain the guard room with his fictions on the subject— He has not a friend in the world & the people who acted as his guardians have never written to enquire for him & what is to become of him it is impossible to say— From the day he came here he has never looked up & I am sure no one can tell the color of his eyes.

I was in great hopes that the packet w^d have come before I wrote, but it may not be here for ten days, & ours must start today. I have been wearying for long to hear from you again & every time I see a bustle in the Fort I am sure the express has come.

This is Beppos birthday. I wish I were sure that on every other, he would be as good & as well as he is this day. I have

¹The reference probably is to the Francis J. Greenway bankruptcy in 1842. See Alexander Simpson, *The Sandwich Islands* (London, 1843), p. 53.

²William Thew. See Glazebrook, *Hargrave correspondence*, p. 416.

never had nerve to go to the Mess room this winter but Willie & the D^r are coming here to supper. They have got the last piece of the bacon boiled & I am sure that both Hargrave & Willie will tell Papa their opinion in very loud terms— They are every night more struck with its goodness than they ever were before. I have been obliged to use some force to keep Beppo from regularly becoming one of the Mess, Gibeault Marg^t & his father all encouraging him in his liking for society. He was crammed with fried fish in the morn^g & whatever they had at tea time & dinner, that he used to run about drinking all day & screaming at night thro' his sleep. He seldom gets in since I got well & I think he must be all the better as there are fewer dreams & very little milk consumed now. His drum has got a strong new parchment upon it & is as effective as ever. He had beat the original cover to pieces but luckily we have a large trade in deer parchment & Gibeault soon arranged it. Rose [the dog] & he are still inseparable & she is now going about with her white face dyed with cranberries & he is sitting with his pencil making Os for poor Gandma. This is the name he has for writing. He flatters himself he is very kind but I dont think he knows what Gandma means as he often calls me so. Hargrave prints letters for him with his pencil so that he has a notion of what writing is & he knows that letters go & come.

Willie has been perfectly well all Winter. His cheeks are as fat as I have seen them & he is in good spirits & has got through with his work so that they will have May & the greater part of June for tent living & preparing themselves for the toil of the Summer. The goose & duck shooting will begin this month. M^r Ross writes that Clementina is doing very well, but Miss Ross never alludes to her. Margaret has been quite well. Hargrave has had fewer headaches than either of the 2 last winters but he has become very large, & I dont feel easy about it. I am certain he is 2 st[one] heavier than when we came. He takes it coolly himself & wont walk, standing all day at a desk, eating drinking & sleeping as well as any one can do, under any circumstances. M^r Finlayson was quite well when I heard, so was M^{rs} F. She does not seem now to expect to leave Red River this year. M^{rs} Cowley & her husband too were wonderful out at Manitoba. M^r Roberts the Sunday before, had taken a copy of *Plato* out of his pocket

& made & read quotations in the pulpit. He is just as he was & preaches for M^r Cochran. M^r Evans & M^r Ross are not getting on so smoothly as they anticipated & the wives appear at open war.

I hope that you are all well. I often wonder about the boys & how different Alex. will be now. I suppose every one will be changed, & I am certain that if you had seen me for two months you would not have known me. The D^r says that by washing the nipples for 2 months before confinement soreness is quite avoided. As I had nothing of the kind before I never dreaded it & indeed did not know of the preventive. It was to be done with brandy & water. I shall now finish my letter. I feel as if I were deliberately vexing you by writing so much but I am sure you like to hear all, distressing as it has been to me.

Give my best love to Papa Polly Flora & the boys. In this Hargrave & Willie join & believe me my dearest Mama

Your most affectionate daughter

LETITIA HARGRAVE

Will you give my love to M^{rs} Loudoun M^{rs} Worsley & the Hamiltons if you have an opportunity & to any other one who may ask.

There will be no use of my writing by the Canada canoe on the 10th of Augst as it never gets down before the ship gets home so that I shall have no other opportunity.

39. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

York Factory 10th April 1843

My dear Mama

Y^r letter arrived late yesterday having reached Sault on the 31st Decem^r & been forwarded 2 days after by the Spring packet. You may believe I was glad to see it & still more so on Flora's hand writing presenting itself. I am still shaking so much that I w^d not attempt writing but Hargrave insists and I must give my letter to him in 2 hours as poor M^r Peers is to start for Norway House to join the MacKenzie River boats. This of itself would vex me as it is a horrid district & he is a very nice boy— He has

only had these few hours notice, but it is provoking as they have left Hamilton & taken him by way of pleasing Harg^{ve}.¹

I was distressed to hear that you felt poor old Nelly's death so much. Y^u will be assured from the melancholy letter I sent only a few days ago that I have reason to feel acutely both for you & her, but Willie says the D^r must know little about it if he thinks that hernia can exist if neglected, as it either destroys life immediately, or ceases to become dangerous. But I will say no more on this subject.

The curer of Papa's Buffalo tongues, D^r Todd, has had his post Fort Pelly burned to the ground by accident. The burnings of late have been fearful, & I think that Hargrave will kill himself with fear for York. M^{rs} Gladman writes me that she is still in bed. I cant think what can be wrong, as she says she fears that severe sickness has done her an injury. If mental anxiety is likely to add to it she will now be worse as her husband has been ordered off, at a few days notice, & she expects that he will be sent to the Columbia. As for us, I have no idea when we may move, I think not till their Honors consider Willie of age to take charge of York. This is my own conjecture, but I dont see any one else capable or so likely to be capable as he is, as he has been both in the Depot & counting House & gained a name in both, & well he deserves all I can say of him in a domestic consideration for I am sure he is a good man— The MacTags must be a dauntless family George Beatson need not lay his conduct much to heart. M^{rs} Finlayson writes me that Lady Simpson is in extremely bad health, & that her husband had been shocked by the alteration that had taken place during his absence, so much so as to listen to the representations of her mother & D^r Elliott as to the risk of taking her to Montreal this Spring, as he had intended to leave her there while he came to Red River & to pass next Winter in Canada. The Finlaysons were well, Hooping cough raging in the Settlement for the first time. I fear they will bring it here in the boats as of course Indians & Half breeds will have it all ages & it has been very fatal at Red River. M^r Lane has it at F^t Garry. I dont

¹Finlayson to Hargrave, Fort Garry, June 7, 1843: "I am somewhat surprised at young Hamilton's conduct towards you. . . . Had I not been aware of your kind feeling towards him I would have ordered him up instead of Peers, as the Governor mentioned to me that either of them would do."

think they have a D^r of any pretensions, as he is a half breed, & pretty old.¹ In that respect we are well off, and it will be a sad day for me if M^r Gillespie leaves York before us. We can only get a young man at the best & it is improbable that he will have the advantages of our present friend. He is very queer looking & I think his father was anxious about him but he is perfectly correct, & except great laziness in the morn^g & a slight crossness at breakfast time I hear of no faults. There is none of it when his professional services are required, his patience & kindness being unwearied. When I had those pains I mentioned I thought they were stitches altho he used the stethoscope & assured me there was no inflammation. I was long incredulous. They were right over the lungs kidney & under the ribs on the left side. I got much morphia & used fomentations. It is curious but whenever he told me it was a kind of *Tic* I began to get better altho' I c^d not help screaming when I moved that same day.

We are all quite well here except an Indian woman, wife of a servant who has been very ill since Monday week when she had a baby. She has not had a drop of milk yet. I fear poor creature she is dying at least in great danger of doing so. She is old & has a grown family.

I told y^u that the ice had been gravely reported by M^r Wilson as 3 feet & a half but Willie spent a day digging 2 holes in the river & found that it was upwards of 5 feet. There are plenty of Yankee papers come but I have not yet looked at any nor heard of what was going on.

Beppo is raging about the house & Gibeault & he are too much for me. Gibeault is going off with M^r Peers to drive the carriage & he has never rested since he was told to get ready. Bep. thinks that he is going to Gan mama being the only one that Gib^lt has yet driven & he flatters himself that he has a long trip before him & the prospect of seeing you. He heaped up all the trash he could get & insists on having *rump* to eat with him. This means a rump of venison, which he thinks the best thing in the world except stewed apples— Hargrave has promised that he will not send him to a boarding school let the expense be what it

¹Dr. John Bunn (1800-1861) is indicated. See introduction, p. liv.; Ross Mitchell, "Doctor John Bunn" (*The Beaver*, December, 1938, pp. 50-2); Healy, *Women of Red River*, pp. 216-19.

may, he will try & get a clergyman of character to train him, if he is spared to go home. The children brought up here are so simple & ignorant that they are apt to get into ways that those at home escape, & require constant watching— Poor old M^r Cochran at Red River has suffered much from this. His son¹ went home to school, & after all his parents had done for him here, he fell into bad hands, I mean he was used by his school fellows, as a tool for their knavery, & there was a fearful exposure. I dont know whether the poor boy was in jail, but at any rate he was convicted of stealing. I am happy to say that his fathers brother has taken him into his family & treats him kindly— M^r C. is Episcopalian minister at Red River & every one allows that there is not a better man in the world— Hargrave told me too that he would let me go home with him altho it is not likely that he will get himself. Many things may happen to make even my going inconvenient. But it is a comfort to think that I shall not have to let thē little creature go alone in the meantime. Besides the pleasure of getting back to you again, I have a feeling that I w^d not like to see any one but yourselves & poor Mary Hamilton. I am so changed within that I daresay I am much so externally & I w^d shrink from exposing myself to the cool criticism of M^{rs} Worsley who delights in telling me how old people are looking, saying nothing of herself however.

There has been nothing further of John Mac Loughlins murder except that Master & men were all drunk, firing at each other till John who was in the condition of a maniac fell dead. It is a fearful thing, the men will be acquitted, as it will be justifiable homicide, but how are ignorant men to be taught the distinction between that & murder & it is feared that on every petty quarrel the servant will think himself justified in killing his master. The gentlemen here are too apt to thrash & indeed point their guns

¹Thomas Cockran remained in England and finished his education at Oxford University. He returned to Red River in 1849. At Lachine he reported that he had been wrecked and lost all his property, which story, William Mactavish commented, no one believed "as he is said to be a great scamp." He outfitted himself at his father's expense at Sault Ste. Marie and proceeded on his journey. (Mactavish to Hargrave, Sault Ste. Marie, September 4, 1849). He taught at the Red River Academy, was later ordained to the ministry, and remained in Rupert's Land assisting his father until 1864. He then went to Toronto in ill health, and died shortly afterwards.

at their men & M^r Anderson who came across from Vancouver last year was so detested that they confessed that if he had fallen into the river not one w^d have held out a stick to him. One gentⁿ actually was drowned, when he might easily have been saved without a man wetting his foot— The truth of the matter is that it is a hideous country for man to live in & that it is yearly getting worse. Individually I have no fault to find with it, but I pity every gentleman in it. Hargrave likes this place & is perfectly contented. I am sure there is not a man in it who would not rejoice to leave it if he could. I am as well pleased with York as at first, but I only am so from never thinking. You may believe that the eternal barrenness of white water & black pines are not very enlivening to the spirits. The sky is always beautiful night or day, the Aurora being magnificent & the stars very bright. I sew from morn^g till night except standing on the platforms while Beppo is playing about with a host of husky dogs or digging up the snow and going out every morn^g with him in the carriole. I do nothing else. There is no house keeping here nor any thing to look after, Gibeault being mistress both of kitchen & cellar & a very good one he is at least so Beppo & I think—

I have not a thing to say having written by the usual Spring despatch not having the slightest idea that there sh^d be an oppor^y so soon. M^r Peers & Willie are coming to a very early tea. Poor boy, he never knew he was born till now, but he appears quite resolute— Imagine Gibeault buying 12 bells for 3 dogs to make a flourish with at his own expense. Poor Peers wont get much sleep. Beppo is marching about with the old ones & the noise is deafening altho there are but six.

M^{rs} Thom at Red River fought with her Scotch servant¹ & turned her off. The girl laid her case before the magistrates who unanimously espoused her cause & settled that Thom sh^d pay her up to the end of the engagement with expenses home. She compromised however on his resisting altho' the magistrates gave a power to seize his effects & she took only what was due for past service. Thom is Recorder of the Settlement & must know the law— The magistrates were indignant at her compromising. She was married to an old lover of Margarets immediately after—

M^{rs} Cowley has got 20 Indian children to teach & M^{rs} Finlayson

¹Helen Rothnies, servant to Judge and Mrs. Adam Thom, in Red River.

thinks she will wear herself out as she is so devoted to her sense of duty. She maintains that she is well & perfectly happy.

I was very glad to hear that Lockie had gone to M^{rs} Loudouns & that Alex^r was doing well at MacLeans. Frances MacLean at the Drawing room must have been a sight. Surely the Duchess of Hamilton cant be very particular.

Five out of our force of 30 men are to be taken from York & a Russian is coming to teach us to make Brick stoves to save fuel.¹ Hargrave will not let them be built in any of the gentlemens houses he hates the mention of economy in fuel & the Directors seem resolved to exercise him for they write that the great expense of 10 tons of coal for the forge here must be avoided by the use of charcoal. Now the pine does not make charcoal & the expense of bringing the proper wood w^d be much heavier than the coal from Eng^d. They are making a noise about economy.

I was astonished to hear of Miss Smith going to see the Queen & even more so at her being with her mother at Oatfield w^{ch} I w^d have thought even a more unlikely place for them.

The weather here is improving & has been mild for some days past. No news of Uncle or of Dugald by this packet. But the latter was well or we sh^d have heard as there is a public letter. The ship had arrived safely on the 19th Octo^r so that our letters w^d reach [you] of course & I need say nothing about them. The Gov^r got home too & was well all but his eyes, old M^{rs} Simpson says, in great health & spirits & not like a man who had undergone privation or made a tour of the world.² I have not time to look

¹Simpson to Hargrave, December 1, 1842: "As a means of reducing the importations from England, I think Charcoal may be prepared in the country for your Forges, instead of importing Coal. At Sitka where there is a great deal of Blacksmith's work, nothing but Charcoal is used; and as the Russians understand the preparation of that article better than we do, I have obtained from Gov.^r Etholen, one of the Russian American Co^{ys} servants, who will be sent across the Mountains next season, and who will not only instruct your people in the preparation of Charcoal, but also in the building of Russian Stoves, which will be found a great advantage as regards comfort & besides being productive of a great saving in the article of fuel; indeed, the adoption of Russian Stoves at York, will I think enable you to dispense with the services of 3 or 4 of your dépôt Servants." See introduction, p. lxxx.

²See Sir George Simpson, *Narrative of a journey round the world in 1841 and 1842* (2 vols., London, 1845).

over this, & must now close. Willie was very glad to find you were well which I feel we only took for granted as you do not say & I am always apt to fear. He joins Harg^{ve} & me in kindest love to Papa & yr self Polly Flora & the boys

Ever y^r very affect^e

L H

40. TO DUGALD MACTAVISH SR.

York Factory 9th Septem^{br} 1843

My dear Papa

Mary Clark¹ landed on the tenth of August, & delivered all your letters & parcels— She had never been a day sick after she came on board the Prince Rupert, but had suffered a good deal both mentally and bodily on the voyage from Edin^h to Orkney. I am sure she will do very well here, and appears to be perfectly contented. All the passengers gave her a high character for her conduct on board and she has fairly begun cooking of her own accord much to the satisfaction of the “general mess”. Hargrave has already written & as you will read his letter first you will see that we are all well. Willie has sent to tell me not to close my letters till he can tell whether he will be able to write. I have told you for two years how he has been toiled. This season it is worse than ever as he has *no one* to help except a useless little apprentice who can scarcely copy.² I can give you no idea of the state of his looks & spirits, and if Dug^d is as bad, I could not conscientiously tell either one or other to stay another year. Willie is so weakened that it is painful to hear him speak & his eyes are red & blood shot. He never *rests* at night more than 6 hours, generally 4 and from the state of his mind he says he cannot sleep above two. I am convinced that he is as determined as Dugald to go away, at least from York. Harg^{ve} is busy & anxious himself & always keeps telling me to encourage Willie, but all I do is to advise him to write quietly to Uncle John & try if he has influence with the Gov^r either to get proper help, or

¹See introduction, p. lxxviii.

²Hargrave to Ross, July 8, 1843: “and as your Hero Ballantyne appears to be all the names given us by Council, I can merely say, ‘Lord have mercy on us’.”

else to send him elsewhere, for I am certain that he cannot stand it, and after 18 hours incessant labour, there is nothing to raise his spirits but a set of giggling fools who do nothing but smoke & make a noise in the house. M^r Gladman has sent in his resignation but I daresay they will ask him to stay & he will perhaps do it. He advises W^m to rebel, but he wont if he can help it. Every one says the fur trade is worthless now, although it is expected that there will be a revival for a couple of years when the beaver hunts are allowed again. They have been nursing ever since I came—

Hargrave w^d explain why there are only 25 tongues— I did not say any thing about it as I think & so I daresay every one else does, that it is very unfair that we should not get a few. The Gov^r wrote Hargrave to check the purchase of tongues on private account or there would be a minute of Council forbidding their use in the country or even one being sent out of it from or to an individual—always I suppose excepting the Directors.

I rather fear that Dugald has not written home by *our* ship. There is a serious disturbance going on over there. I told Mama in Spring that D^r MacLoughlins son had been killed by his men. D^r MacLoughlin is at war with Sir George, & he imagining that the Gov^r had carried off the murderer to screen him, seized all the other men implicated & has had them in irons ever since. Their evidence proves dreadful cruelty on the part of John MacLoughlin and the gentlemen of the country have been informed that they are liable to be prosecuted for the D^r having imprisoned these men. I have not heard what has been done to the actual murderer, nor even where he now is—but it is supposed that it will be considered man slaughter or even homicide, as he did it to defend or rather to save the life of one of his friends at whom MacLoughlin was taking aim. One set of gentlemen blame the Master & another the men & I rather think that D^r MacLoughlin will bother some of them yet. There are evidently some deep designs going on but Hargrave is quite in the dark & I suppose the Gov^{rs} plans are only known to M^r Finlayson & Donald Ross, who appear to do as they are bid. I suspect too that Sir G^e will have some work & run a little danger himself before he brings the other down, but I dare not say any thing more— I wish very much we were all done of them, but as that is not likely to be soon, I will not

run the risk of bringing others into scrapes by making any observations—

We had a very long winter the river did not break up till the 31st May. The ice floated off very quietly having got much decayed. On the 5th June the gunwale of our sailing boat was so hard frozen into the ground that we could not get a sail, altho the day was fine. The snow did not quite disappear till the beginning of July & we have not had one day of oppressive heat, although not one week has passed without at an average 4 severe thunder storms—

There has been a great deal of illness and one man died of brain fever and another is without any hope of recovery of Typhus— A third was drowned having fallen over board out of a boat, while the ship was unloading, & to crown Harg^{ves} distress, the Schooner¹ has been away for 5 weeks & only provisioned for 4— She went to Churchill apparently very much against her will, as she lay for nearly a week at Five Fathom hole. At last, Harg^{ve} sent a volley to them & they sailed boldly out & next day on going up to the lookout² with a glass, M^r Wilson spied her high & dry on the beach. He set off with a large boats crew & got her off shore & into deep water, when he came back wondering how she had got safely in or out as the shore is covered & the channel of the river too, with immense boulders, however he thought all was right at last & that they c^d not go wrong— Next day the vessel was seen coming back her windlass they said was damaged. It was repaired & they were again sent off with an admonition, lay for two days more at Five Fath hole & at last vanished & have not since been seen nor heard of & it is supposed they have gone ashore again. I wish they may be back before the ship goes.

Poor M^r Evans was here lately in very bad spirits— When I first saw him I could not conceive why every one praised & said he was a gentleman and a man of independent fortune, besides so perfect a missionary that he was encouraged to forget what he really was. Now all hands have turned on him. He got a very sharp letter from Sir George, and has been informed that he must live at the Indian village & leave the Fort. What he has done I cant say, but I really think that the whole affair has been

¹ The *Jane*.

²See introduction, p. lxxv.

caused by M^{rs} Evans & her daughters' successful rivalry over M^{rs} Ross & her children— For they were the derision of the whole passers by for their finery and exhibition of good education and knowledge of astronomy as M^{rs} E. used to say—whereas M^{rs} Ross & Jane did not know the names of the commonest stars— The Rosses have been quite intimate with them & have reported every word & action to M^r or M^{rs} Finlayson¹— Indeed M^r Gladman boasts that while he was in charge of Norway House in Spring, he took notes of a private conversation he had with M^r Evans, signed, & sent them to the Gov^r & he thinks this was very spirited and correct— I suppose M^r Evans will leave the country soon but he has not taken the slightest notice of their change to him—but he looks very much cast down—

M^r Hamilton who had been here for nearly two years has been ordered to MacKenzie's River and started with M^r MacLean² a cousin of D^r Donalds and Donald MacLean, Albany Street. He was home in Mull last winter & brought the Packet by way of Canada— He had just heard of the death of an uncle in Londⁿ who had been some way about the India House I think, and who has left all he had to him. He says it is a perfect independence & wished to leave the service, but not having given a years notice, he would have forfeited his retiring interest of 7 years half share, so he returned & Gov^r & Council have *punished* him by ordering him to a miserable starving post on MacKenzie's River— I suppose he will retire next year. He told Willie that he would have gone down to Kilchrist but had not time—

M^r Christie will retire next year. There are 2 Chief Factors & 7 Traders to *make* this year. I fear there is not the least chance of Willie or we would have heard. I have no doubt that Harg^{ve}

¹Finlayson to Hargrave, August 9, 1843: "I have been told that you have become 'desperately pious' since Mr. Evans visited York in 1841. His wife has, I am told, been edifying the people of Norway House, by telling them that you and Mr. Evans retired every morning after Breakfast to a private Room for the purpose of praying together."

²This was John McLean (see W. S. Wallace (ed.), *John McLean's notes of a twenty-five years' service in the Hudson's Bay territory* (Toronto: The Champlain Society, 1932). He was a cousin of Alexander McLean (formerly of the Breadalbane Fencibles), the Selkirk settler who was killed during the troubles of 1816. (See John Halkett, *Statement respecting the . . . Selkirk Settlement . . .*, London, 1817, p. 97).

will be one of the Factors, but he has had no direct assurance altho broad enough hints. No one has ever said that there is any expectation of either W^m or Dug^d soon getting their commission—I wrote Uncle John in hopes of reminding him that Willie was not a boy now, and to add my declaration that he was worked hard & should in fairness be rewarded. They say that Uncles influence is greater than ever with Sir George. Whether the Gov^{rs} with his superiors is as great I don't know, but I feel perfectly sure he w^d do his best for any one he patronized & I know he does our boys, for I am perfectly certain it is only that he needs reminding. He was scarcely home last year till he set off for Paris to plead the cause of the Sandwich Islanders with the French Govern^t. He succeeded & returned to Canada for this country in March. *This* year he will winter at Lachine, but will be in Londⁿ for awhile. Harg^{ve} mentioned Hec^r to him but I know he has even more than usual to think of & will forget. I meant to put Mamas letter outwards but having written upon the 4 sides I could not, so I address [yours] to her in case you may be from home— If you still cannot do better for Hector I hope you will write Sir George immediately & remind him.

Beith the tinsmith is going home. M^r Hargrave has cancelled his contract to get rid of him. He is the greatest brute in the Fort and that is saying a good deal. He has been only 4 years, 5 being the term agreed on, but he is a miserable tradesman and has 35 pounds a year. They parted by mutual consent. He worked at his trade from 1st Octob^r till May— Then he packed furs &c., and it was about this that they quarrelled. M^r H asked if he had read the contract he had signed that he should obey orders & serve the Comp^y as they might require. He replied that [illegible] he could read as well as some that thought more of themselves and after a good deal of discussion Harg^{ve} asked leave of Council to send him home as he said he wished to get away and he got permission immediately.

I need not say how glad we all were to hear that you and Flora were so much better. I think Floras illness must have been the same as mine only that it was my side that the pains were in & I was neither so long, nor so violently ill as Mary Clark says poor Flora was— I think if I had not got ill my head would have gone wrong as I never slept after the first week following my

childs death. They helped me with drugs as much as they could but the moment my eyes were closed I awoke dreaming of it. After I got ill I both slept & eat at least as well as could be looked for.

I dont know on what day the ship will sail. The rivers are all so dry that the boats have to be dragged down as they seldom have water to float them. This is caused by the dry frosty season we have had. The boats used to come easily in ten days from Norway H^e this year they take 18— When the tide is out even here the river seems empty & it must be worse further up. Some of the brigades have not arrived yet.

I will write Mama by this post too. Hargrave & Willie unite with me in kindest love to all and believe me my dear Papa

Y^r m^o affec^{te}

LETITIA HARGRAVE

41. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

York Factory 10th Sept^r 1843

My dear Mama

Your Feb^y letter reached us on the 27th of June and the ship ones on the 9th Augst. Mary Clark was a whole week in Stromness and she had comfortable lodgings & was very kindly treated by M^{rs} Clouston, as well as a M^r & M^{rs} Mathieson at Granton Pier. She says Papa gave her £5 to pay her expenses and as she brought 4 shillings of it here, she must have been pretty economical particularly if she was as liberal to porters and lodging house servants as she flatters herself she was. M^r Hargrave has prepared a bill for £5 to Papa. She has been blind from mosquito bites ever since she landed, I have seen many a face but never one like hers. The best of it is that no mosquitoes have been seen for a fortnight. The lamentations are unceasing, and she wont let the D^r see her in case he should laugh. In other respects she is perfectly well and as she kept telling me to write every thought that occurred to her, I was obliged to tell her to do it herself, so she said she w^d write Miss Flora, for that young lady was a perfect goddess. Every article she sees she wishes to send home, & before she had entered the Fort gate she was looking if there were any beasts to

send their skins to Flo and she has never ceased urging me to get Hector sent for. I am sure she thinks I am very supine, for she cannot be made to understand that I have no power. And Capⁿ Herd assures me there was a great deal of demur about Mary's coming here herself and that I am indebted to his own exertions in persuading Capⁿ Drew to give her a passage. I dont know about the truth but Herd says it was on the 25th May that he agreed.

Doi Dame was greatly delighted with the *dies*. He always sleeps with the dog w^{ch} is his favorite because it can swallow. He always says it is crying for *num* and down goes another sweetie. He takes great care of his things as those sent by M^{rs} Webster 2 years ago, are all as good as ever & all his picture books are in good preservation— The people here have many of them had sore eyes. M^{rs} Gladman & 2 of her boys were very bad. Doi was threatened but I got the D^r instantly and they have not got worse being merely bleared a little & sore when he wakens. He is to be kept in the house & have them bathed often. Excepting this he has been quite well ever since I wrote. I look forward with terror to his losing Margaret. Harg^{ve} & Willie think that Dunnett ordered her home supposing that we would not be able to get another and that we w^d petition her to stay. I dont know, but she told M^{rs} Gladman that she did not think she w^d really have gone till the ship came, & she said to me when the ship guns were heard that if there was no woman come she would not on any account go— I said nothing but was resolved not to let her stay. She has been laboring making gowns for me, frocks for Doi and Nancy (our other servant) and has altered Mary's gowns & turned & sorted her black bonnet as anxiously as if she had just come to the house. Her eldest brother was a brass founder just released from apprenticeship. He enlisted without his fathers knowledge last winter. He wrote Marg^t saying that his father had refused to write him, that he c^d not get a days work and was in actual starvation besides taking the morsel he got from his mother & the children, so that he had deliberately enlisted and could not repent doing it. He wrote from the Isle of Wight—

M^{rs} Gladman has been here since the month of July, all her family being with her—M^r G came to see the furs packed and they all accompanied him. She was very ill all winter & in April had

a dead baby— I observed that she was very much changed and looked broken hearted, but thought it might be from losing the child altho' she said nothing about it. But the day after the ship came I went into her house & found her looking flushed, having evidently been crying. I asked her if there were any of them ill & she said she had just had a letter from a poor boy she had never expected to hear from, her son David Stewart, and she gave it to me— He said that as his father had not been ashamed to show that he had no natural affection, he need have no hesitation in telling her that his cruelty had been so great that he ran from his house and worked his passage home. He went to a half breed brother of M^{rs} Gladmans, a M^r Vincent who keeps a school near London but he did not like to be burdened with him & the boy was glad to get a situation as Assistant Teacher in a gentlemen's boarding school, at £16 for the first year & £20 the second. He sent the name of the school, but I forget it and a character from the Master which was very satisfactory— M^r Gladman was in Canada lately & asked M^r Stewart the cause of his sons leaving him so young. Stewart very coolly informed him that he took his bad qualities from his mother. M^r G. of course gave battle, but was always civil till the boy sent a letter he had got from his father in answer to one he had written from Eng^d desiring that he w^d never more attempt to have any intercourse with him and that if 5 shillings were necessary to save him from the gallows he would never give it. M^r Stewart lives in Quebec & as the Canada packet left this, that day, M^r G. sat down and wrote that they had heard of Davids welfare, and took the oppor^y to remark that as M^r Stewarts harshness both to him and to his present wife & her sons, were notorious, he could assure him that let the boys turn out ever so bad the world's experience would lead them to blame him more than their mother for their bad qualities. M^r Gladman delights in a fight & he narrated the whole of his letter first to Willie then to Harg^{ve} & I daresay I will have it the 1st oppor^y. But the poor woman has not known where the boy was for a year and this was the reason she was so ill. She says the boy was born after her husband left her & on marrying Gladⁿ she did not like to burden him with 3 so she kept the 2 girls & sent the boy home to Eng^d where her brother the school master pocketed his money for board & education & made the poor child his foot boy— The

step father Gladman was in Eng^d & told this, so the boy was sent home to Quebec, where his step mother was very kind, but his father the reverse. M^{rs} G. has got fat since & titters away in the old style—

I find that Julian is still addicted to the family fashion of making people older than they are. M^{rs} Mactavish¹ was not quite 18 when she was in Londⁿ in the March immediately before me. Lady Simpson very often spoke of her. She was pretty & a very fine dashing looking girl, but wofully ignorant of the ways of the world. For instance she went to drink tea with old M^r Simpsons family *alone* and dressed herself in a lilac satin gown lace &c. They told her that when a young person like her was asked by other young ones she ought just to come dressed so and so— Well, Lady Simpson had a large ball, Miss Cameron was invited formally, & to the horror of her ladyship she went dressed in a shabby dark silk long sleeves high neck &c. All the Simpsons were very fond of her, and before they could dream that I should have anything to do with her, praised her for great good temper, cheerfulness & many other things— M^r MacLean, a cousin of *Snouties* told me that she had certainly refused to marry M^r James Keith at Lachine, he is rather younger than Uncle much much richer being about the most wealthy of the gentlemen. Uncle asked him to the marriage but he declined, however he put on resolution & invited Uncle & lady to dinner while MacLean was there. Our Aunt sat at the mess table and gave a detail of her experiences during the winter she passed with her uncle at Temiscamingue, caught so many fish snared so many rabbits, made such & such marches on snow shoes— I should have said however that she has been the standing flirt of the Southern department from James Keith down to apprentice clerks among whom she is immensely popular. I have heard plenty about her from young & old men & women and can assure Julian that she neither looks nor is ill tempered. Uncle wished me to write her, & said that had he been at home she w^d have written to me, but he had left her at the Lake & was himself at Lachine. Harg^{ve} bid me do as

¹This was Elizabeth (Eppie) Cameron, who was married to John George McTavish in March, 1843. She was the niece of Angus Cameron of Temiskaming House (see W. S. Wallace, "An unwritten chapter of the fur-trade" (Royal Society of Canada, *Transactions*, section ii, May, 1939, p. 7).

I liked but he thought she w^d feel more interest in the children if their relations patronized her willingly. I consulted W^m who at once bid me write as Uncle wished it, so I sent letters to both. It is extraordinary how fond all the people principally young clerks who come here in summer, are of Uncle, & if he were Willies father he could not be more affect^{te} nor anxious about him. About his marriage he said to W^m that he had given his children a kind & good natured mother & companion, that was all. To Hargrave that after 18 months dreary loneliness he had been accepted by a person that he hoped would comfort his deathbed & do the needful after his demise— This was all he said on the subject.

M^r MacLean said there was a rumour that her uncle M^r Cameron was to be married to Miss Turner. M^r James Keith & he have both retired *rich* this season. M^r Cameron has a family but if his Indian wife is alive she does not live with him, I suppose she is now some other persons. M^r MacLean is a Trader, he was married to a daughter of M^r Charles who died at Ungava Hudsons Straits of her first child the year I came here. He told Harg^{ve} before he left this, that he admired Miss Evans very much, and w^d ask her to marry him. Miss Evans came here with her father for a few days last month. I asked if M^r MacLean had reached Norway H^e before they started. She said oh yes he remained there a fortnight & spent every afternoon with papa. But that was all I c^d find out. I am certain M^r Evans w^d never allow her to go to MacKenzies River but whether he will ask her if he returns next year to go to Canada is more than I can say—

M^{rs} Ross's hatred of the parsons wife has reached a *pitch*. M^r Gladⁿ declares that she consumed between 30 & 40 kegs of butter, each weighing 56 lbs, the flour was even worse & all this in one year, with only her husband daughter & self. Our head carpenter was hurried away to make a house for them at the Indian village where they are to remove to as soon as it can be built. The Gov^r wrote a letter to Evans in w^{ch} Gladⁿ says with great glee, that every thing Evans had ever said or done was commented upon. I mean all that was considered out of his way. G. likewise says that Ross used to take notes & forward them to head quarters & this while they were to all appearance on the most brotherly terms— When Gladⁿ went to take charge of Norway H^e in Spring while Ross was at the Meeting at R. River,

the first thing he did was to quarrel with Evans, and tell him deliberately that he was telling fibs— Poor Evans took it coolly as what could he do, & a note of their battle was sent off express —& this along with Don Ross's complaints decided his expulsion. He was an altered man, but altho Harg^{ve} has often been obliged to refuse things to him, they continue good friends as before, but I never saw any one so much changed. M^{rs} E. staid at home to make pickles &c. They had the half of M^{rs} Ross's garden and the best house in the Fort. It will be a great victory to them, but I have my own suspicions that our friend Donald will soon require all his cautiousness & high favor as he has got out ten gallons of whiskey besides buying or getting from this, 8 gallons of brandy. The whiskey is prohibited altogether, there is no one but himself & wife to drink it, & here with all our mess, we never have nearly so much brandy. Beside that Gibeault is always drunk once a day, sometimes 3 or 4 distinct times. I have battled with Harg^{ve} to take the key from him but he regularly met my entreaties with how can he drink much when our brandy lasts so much longer. The key had been taken 2 years ago, & Gibeault volunteered a vow of teetotalism, w^{ch} of course he did not keep 2 hours, but Harg^{ve} was incredulous & held him up as a pattern of reform till I used to blush, as I knew that both Wilson & the D^r knew of his performances. This summer I took the key myself of our own wine & brandy and the result has shown that Gibeault is not to be trusted. He still keeps the wine of the Summer Mess, but Harg^{ve} says he will never put it in Gibeaults power to make merry again, either summer or winter. The only thing I cared about was whenever he got tipsy he marched off into the mens houses & told such stories, frequently about Marg^t. Some one was sure to tell her & she informed M^{rs} Gladman that she never would have agreed to leave us had it not been for Gibeaults aspersions. He is a very good servant & very kind to Doi. I dont think him accountable having had delirium tremens once just before I came. M^r Harg^{ve} has told him for Marys behoof, that the next quarrel he hears in the house or the very next complaint made he is to be sent about his business. We

have got a new cook¹ who they say can boil potatoes & Orkney cod. Mary is to teach him other things, these being useless here.

I have got the girl² M^{rs} Gladman found, she is fair & altho Marg^t denounces her I am not so particular. She is very cleanly & does all she is bid, that is all that can be expected for awhile, and I am very glad to get her as Mary will never have to cross the door. I will take Doi out myself.

M^{rs} Loudoun did not write me but I have sent a letter to her. I am very sorry that in consequence of an order to Harg^{ve} to check the private purchase of Buffaloe tongues on account of the best being picked H. feels himself compelled to set the example & only sends 25 to Papa & *none* to M^{rs} Loudoun. I said nothing about it to her. The people are grumbling & I dont much wonder besides the Comp^y wont make much as the fewer there are to sell the more they get for them at the public sales at the House. I dont know what will be done next but gentlemen are forbid using them even in travelling & are ordered to live upon the fine Pemmican provided for them. If the service is not at a low ebb their regulations look very queer as our allowance even of mustard³ has been cut down & to make things better the freight of private orders by the ship has been raised from eight to eleven pounds a hundred. The Dividends are decreasing in spite of all and the people here maintain that the returns of furs are not fallen off.

Harg^{ve} has just got a letter from Sir G- saying he thinks the Factorship⁴ secure but as we will not get the parchment till

¹Hargrave to Clouston, September 1, 1843: "The young man Geo. Davidson I think will serve our purpose as Mess Cook. My new head servant as well arrived in that capacity and with a few lessons from her I think he will go on well."

²See introduction, p. lxxviii.

³Simpson to Hargrave, March 3, 1843: "*Sauces*—I consider it quite unnecessary to indent for Sauces & Pickles on public account. . . . Let me beg they may never appear in a YF Indent again. I never used fish sauce in the country, and never saw any one use it or pickles either. From the quantity of Mustard indented for, one would suppose it is now issued as an article of trade with the Indians."

⁴Simpson to Hargrave, July 9, 1843: "I think we are secure in the C. Factorship for next year and without any [illegible] flattery I may say that I do not know any one more deserving of the step: to be plain with you, however, I may say in confidence that some people think you are likely to Ride on the Top of

July next we must know nothing about it till that comes. The Norway affair is quite up. D. Finlayson had £2000 Harg^{ve} Nicol Finlayson & Donald Ross £1000. I don't think they expect to get any thing back altho Pelly says they will. All is in the shape of machinery steam mills &c. & they are not likely to get what they expect for such things. Poor Don Ross & Nicol Finlayson say they have no other money whatsoever & are a good deal cast down.

M^{rs} Duncan has not written me so I [illegible] need not trouble myself writing to her. I hope she is well. However Donald Tom & his wife were very kind to Jⁿ Finlayson. I shall only say here that the marmalade & jam are excellent—& all quite safe. We have not had time to read many papers but I soon espied MacArthur on Pauperism & it seems quite as *donsy* as the generality.

Tell Polly I will write her by Marg^t also Flora. The Gladmans were struck with admiration at the worsted shawl &c. My letters may be a week or more after this. There are Indian shoes for Flo & her, Beppos fire bag for you but I will speak of them in my next. Willie is delighted with his rod, but he has written to y^u. I expect to manage a few lines for papa. M^r Hamilton has been sent to MacKenzie's River a brother of Ballantyne the Edin^h artist^t is in his place here. Marg^t will send the letters by post & leave the parcel with M^{rs} Worsley to whom I have sent a country basket & some preserved cranberries in place of tongues I had intended for her.

With best love, I am

Ever y^r very affect^{te} dau^r

42. TO FLORENCE MACTAVISH

York Fac^y 10 Sept^r 1843

My dear Flora

I received y^r letters of Feb^y in June, & the ship ones of course by Mary— The packet came on shore on the 9th. Mary arrived your Commission, but I am satisfied that your excellent judgment is a guarantee sufficiently strong on that hand."

¹Robert M. Ballantyne was a brother of John Ballantyne, a noted portrait painter in London.

next day— I was out with Doi when I perceived a boat rowing up the river & Mary stuck up behind the steers man. I w^d have preferred encountering her in my own house, but Doi w^d not move till he saw what was going on. So we stood at the top of the boat slip, a sloping quay, made of the trunks of trees— As soon as the boat reached it Mary got out. As the slip is rather steep & the logs of w^{ch} it is made are round & not placed quite close together, the walking is not *good* at the best— To an old lady just off a long sea voyage, when she c^d not feel very steady, the difficulty was increased. She saw us standing & in spite of my yells she insisted on running. I was sure she w^d fall into the river but after a great deal of pitching & tossing she got up, quite out of breath. I felt very glad to see the old soul. After wondering a little & remarking that every thing was made of wood, & that the woods reminded her of the shrubbery I got her to answer questions but even yet she is in a state of excitement & has not given me so much *news* as she might have done. She assured me she was sure M^r Burk¹ had taken her for a lady and always called her Jane (M^r Burk being a distinguished naturalist by the by must know a person's class I suppose). "He said to me one day (he is an extraordinary discreet gentleman) Jane, might I beg of you to make me a pincushion to stick insects upon"— So I soon made him one, cut down flannel, & covered it with a piece of red crimson velvet, a bit of Miss Mary's old bonnet." She went on to describe his admiration when she gave it to him. Now for M^r B's remarks. When they had been a week from Orkney Mary was sitting at breakfast with the steward in the gun room one very calm morn^g. A cock crew. Mary pricked up her ears but said nothing. The cock persevered & at last Mary fairly asked, if that was a fowl. Yes. Are we coming near America. Oh no, we are not far from Orkney yet. & is it in Orkney that cock's crowing.

¹Rich, *McLoughlin letters, third series*, p. 59, n. 3: "Joseph Burke, botanist, who sailed from London to York Factory in the Company's ship *Prince Rupert* in the summer of 1843. . . . Prior to his journey to North America, Joseph Burke spent several years in the interior of South Africa collecting plants and animals for the Earl of Derby, and . . . his work was so satisfactory he was commissioned to undertake a similar errand in North America and California for the Earl of Derby and the Royal Botanic Gardens." The Hudson's Bay Archives state that no published account of Burke's North American journey has been found.

M^r Kellock the ship surgeon, is a very nice man or boy for he is young, a surgeon of Guys Hospital in the meantime, his uncle is surgeon of Greenwich & a man of *note*. He came here for an outing & has never been on board since the packet came except one day that he went with Beppo & me to see the ship. He is the only *very* recherché person I have seen come here, & is *meek* with it all as he is as great with Messrs Wilson & Hackland¹ our skipper, as any of them, & altho they *are* my winter Mess Mates & very good men, they are most uncommonly vulgar. At table M^r W's performances are very remarkable & D^r Gillespie always has one dangerous fit of laughter at each meal. For instance if he is asked to take any thing he does not wish, he gives his reasons, such as My stomach cant manage it, or I got enough of that at such time or place, does not agree with me, makes me drink till I am sore. Hackland is also from Orkney, & wears large white worsted gloves, & a sulphur colored vest, & white trowsers on Sunday at midsummer of course.

We have got back Bobby Ballantyne, the Edin^h artists brother, he is about 18, & very conceited they say. He first went to Red River, then to Norway H^e & now he is here again. He was getting rather stylish on Willie's hands, so our brother intimated that if he heard a word from him that he did not approve of, he w^d kick him out of the office. Since that he has been very douce. D^r Gillespie & Bob had a little affair in the course of w^{ch} the D^r seized him & made preparations for whipping him as if he had been a little boy, on the platform too, but poor Bobby begged pardon & escaped. A son of M^r Charles² (half breed) is also to Winter here—

M^r Hamilton has been sent to an outpost on MacKenzie's River, he will get no drink there for love or money. He did not come to say good bye to me, as he blamed Willie & said he had told Harg^{ve}. Willie never told any thing about him, & if he had Harg^{ve}

¹James Hackland of Birsay, in the Orkneys, entered the service as a sloop-master in 1843, and served in the York Factory district until his retirement in 1858. He re-engaged as a clerk in 1861, and was appointed in charge of Pembina in the Red River district. He was made a chief trader in 1863, and served until 1872, when he retired to Red River.

²Thomas Charles. In his *Hudson's Bay* (Edinburgh, 1848), pp. 145-78, Ballantyne describes him as his room-mate at York from 1843 to 1845.

w^d not have minded it unless he saw something wrong himself. He broke out one day & gave Harg^{ve} such insolence & that was the first time they had any difference. These are all the people that are to winter here, 6 gentlemen besides Harg^{ve}.

You may prepare for hearing uncommon stories about us all from Beith or Tinnie, who fought last Spring with Harg^{ve}. He gets £35 per an. & is required to work at any thing in summer. I told Papa so far, but during last holidays they had balls in the mens houses, at w^{ch} all the gents except Willie & Harg^{ve} were present. The D^r quarrelled with Tinnie who was of course very impertinent. The D^r tried to beat him but he always sat down in a corner so that he did not like to do it. At last Tinnie thinking himself safe announced to the whole party gentle & simple, that there was but *one* gentleman in the whole country, & that *one* was *his* cousin M^r Mactavish. The D^r rushed to W^m certain that Tinney's hour was come & that Willie would annihilate him, but what ever he may have thought, Willie took it coolly & merely said there were enough of his enemies to thrash Tinnie without his plaguing himself— This is the first of the men that have turned unmanageable on Harg^{ves} hands. A good many clerks have given battle poor sinners I daresay they have their own sorrows but he has no choice. Even as it is they do not always do what they ought.—

I did not say that after I had taken the large jars of jam & marmalade out of the box, I sat down to breakfast without taking out the newspapers. Beppo was puffing about, working hard as he says, when all of a sudden a loud cheer proceeded from him & Gam Gam well done Doi Dame got more Gam & in he came carrying his *own* can w^{ch} I had not found. He never proposed to open it, but out of his sight he w^d not suffer it all day. It was actually carried to Sir John with him. When he went down to see the ship, he kept chuckling on D^r Kellock's knee, declaring that he was going to Grand Mama. On passing the head of her he espied the figure of Prince Rupert, & shouted Grand Mama. His courage is prodigious as I was afraid that when he was put into the barrel to be pulled up the side, he w^d like older people feel frightened. The gent went up by the ladder first, then the mate came down [&] put me into the cask. Marg^t prayed that I w^d leave Bep for her, & I was pulled up like the sacks of malt

you know. I felt giddy & was afraid Pack w^d let Doi fall out. Nevertheless I stood on a gun & saw her & him put in, the Boatswain whistled away, & up they went over the side, & down on deck, Doi looking quite cool. When the cask was set on deck his exclamation was "Mama come back." He was equally pleased to go down again, when we were coming back.

We were all out taking a sail one forenoon before the ship came—I mean Harg^{ve} Doi & I with M^r Wilson to steer. It was rather rough & an attempt poor Beppo made to take some lunch, was punished by pretty severe sea sickness. Wilson wished to get home at one tack & to make it as long as possible, went in spite of H's warning too near shore. The consequence was he knocked the boat agst a large boulder & made a hole. I petitioned that they w^d run on shore, but they declared they were not going to be a laughing stock. One of the men set to work & ladled out the water & we got across. The damage being to windward it leant to the other side & the hole was above. [Illegible sentence.]

We are rather getting tired of Wesleyans and quite sick of Episcopalians. [Illegible sentence.] The Catholic clergy here let them be what they may elsewhere are exemplary. The Indians see them living perfectly alone & caring for nothing but converting them & often they think more of such men than those who come with families & bully for every luxury & complain of every appearance of neglect getting literally furious on the slightest annoyance felt by them or their accomplished ladies. The Catholics have much more influence with the Indians who think & I do too, that they are better men. Their influence too has always been exercised in favor of the Comp^y w^{ch} they have the sense to see is for the benefit of the Indians too. Whereas the others stir up the people to do whatever will plague them, just for the pleasure of meddling.

There is a Huskie man¹ here with his wife son & daughter.

¹This man's name was Ooligbuck. He was evidently now returning from the Dease and Simpson expedition, which he joined at Fort Confidence in April, 1839, as guide. (See Alexander Simpson, *Life and travels of T. Simpson*, p. 308). He went also with John Rae's Arctic expedition in 1846-7. Simpson to Hargrave, December 2, 1844: "I am glad to find by Mr. Harding's letter, that he has already secured the services of Ooligbuck for the Discovery Expedition . . . under the charge of Dr. Rae."

They have just returned from MacKenzie's river & have saved £100— Imagine a genuine Huskie with such a sum. The boy is about 12 & speaks ten languages. He is otherwise a little scamp, but very smart & hideously fat & husky like, tho very well dressed. The girl looks better & the father told Harg^{ve} the wife was pretty pretty. He went to the North with Franklin as an Interpreter, he is going home to Churchill.

With best love believe me ever my dear Flora

Y^r very affect^{te} sister

L H

43. TO MARY MACTAVISH

York Factory 12th Sept^r 1843

My dear Polly

I received your letters and your kind presents, shawl cap & all the shoes, and am very much obliged for all the care & trouble you have had. The shawl is beautiful and at this season in particular very useful. I w^d have been very glad of the cap during my illness, as my head suffered too & after using fomentations of hot water, I used to get cold— M^{rs} Gladman was delighted with all the worsted things, nothing of the kind having ever been seen by her. They don't even wear knitted stockings, socks made of duffle & cloth leggins called Indian stock^{gs} being the substitute. None of the ladies here can knit. I taught Juliet Stewart¹ & gave her 2 heels of a stocking in different stages away with her, but don't expect she will benefit much—

I was much distressed to hear from Mary Clark that you have been ill for a long time before she came away, and am very much dispirited altogether. I hope Mama will keep well. I am always terrified that I will hear that she too is ill but there is no use in my saying what or how I feel—

I have now written all my letters except yours & Floras and will not close them till the last. I have quite as little as usual to write about as there has been nothing doing here. There are 2 clerks going home one an Irishman is leaving the service as the

¹One of Mrs. Gladman's daughters. She married a Mr. Bennett of Port Hope, Ontario, in 1865.

Gov^r declined promising him promotion— He has a great deal of spirit in his own opinion & has been making a *hubbub* because Harg^{ve} c^d not give him as many buffalo tongues as he wished & refused to take the quantity allowed, because it was less than some one else had got. W^m got *enraged* & gave him a volley as he had entered the number in the accounts & had to scratch & alter them when M^r O'Brian¹ chose to change his mind & refuse them— M^r Thew the other goes strutting about, he is accused of attempting to stab his last master, he laughs at the joke & says it was all nonsense. M^r Roberts the mission school master is also here. He has plagued the Society to recall him so at last they have done so, with a reprimand, & an intimation that they are done of him. He is not at all daunted, he thinks the Red River people very rude, & much addicted to personalities. They used to roar & laugh in church while he was preaching & no great wonder as his appearance language & manner are all equally ludicrous. D^r Todd too is here on his way home on a Winters leave. He is married to a half breed,² a cousin of Margaret's who does not seem very much elated with her high connections in this country. I wonder if the D^r will pay her any attention during the voyage. His father in law, a settler in Red River has partonized her by writing her by every opportunity—

I think I wrote last year that the Indians here had all gone mad about religion as they flattered themselves. An Indian called *Abbis Shabbish* called himself Bishop & misled them all, got our hunters to steal for him &c., & even frightened mothers to steal their sons clothes & give them to him. He came into the Fort & went to church. After prayers he came up to shake hands with Hargrave who refused his hand & affronted him before the people, white & red.³ Upon this he marched off to the camp

¹John O'Brien. See Rich, *McLoughlin letters, second series*, pp. 398-9.

²Elizabeth Dunnet was the mother of Dr. Todd's children born between 1823-34 (H.B.C. Arch. E. 4/1. Red River Register of Baptisms). She was the daughter of William "Dennet" of Red River (d. 1864, aged eighty-four years) who was possibly a brother of John Dunnet.

³Berens to Hargrave, March 31, 1845: "I read with greatest interest your account of the Frenzy or Fanaticism which had taken place at your depot and its neighborhood and I assure you I feel deeply for the great anxiety which must necessarily have preyed upon you during the raging of that mania. From knowing something of the people I can fully appreciate the danger in which you

at Nelson River & nothing was heard of him for a year. A few weeks ago, a number of Indians came in & said that Abbis Shabbish had cut the throats of his father in law his wife & 3 boys. They were all found dead in their tent. He had carried off the old man's gun & a little ammunition & went coolly off to Severn, without any one trying to stop him. They think that he has become a Windigo or devil and every one will be terrified to irritate him. He had been very bad to his wife, and his own uncle in whose tent they lived, had told him he would make her father take her from him. Abbis said nothing but went at night to her father's tent & murdered the whole family— Two wives had left him before for the same reason—

Our Indians are all flocking to Norway H^c, I rather think there will soon be too many of them there. M^r Ross's district has been a losing one this year, as they will not leave the Parson to go to their Wintering grounds, therefore there are few packs of furs & what are, M^r Gladman considers such curiosities, that he has sent them directly to *their Honors* in Londⁿ, or rather a few select specimens of them. So Donald will get a good drilling & very little idea he has that there is any thing of the kind in store, but Gladman delights in stirring up a little and he pressed Harg^{ve} to do that & sundry other things not overly courteous, such as opening boxes marked "Private property" & finding them as he expected, filled with Buffalo tongues w^{ch} were to be sent out of the country without charge. This exploit was performed by an old Factor M^r Rowand in the Saskatchewan who is in the buffalo country. It had been practised successfully for 8 years *at any rate*, but I think M^r G. has knocked it up for the future.

Beppo has learned from Mary Clark to harangue about "Miss

and those around you stood. The decision and firmness with which you met the leader and disgraced him before all his followers, reflects the greatest credit upon your conduct and I must say that I am really sorry that your diffidence requesting that your communication to me be held as strictly confidential prevents me from shewing it to some of my fellow directors who I feel persuaded would have been most happy to have been made acquainted with the real history of the case and would have joined me in . . . thanks to you for having been the means of bringing about so desirable a result. We have spoken seriously to the Mission on this point that they should . . . prepare the minds of the natives and by instilling into them thoroughly religious principles, to prevent them being carried away by such madness."

Mary" & Miss Flora. I am often amused with him sitting on the floor speaking to the dog Rose about you, sighing & telling her that no lady will send her *Gam* or *Dies* unless she is a clever boy. There were a great number of white cotton plants (like what there are in bogs & among rushes at home) growing right before the office till lately. There was no keping Bep out of this garden as he called it, & as he made a great noise, either laughing & singing, or crying & scolding, Willie c^d not write & used to come out to frighten him off. Then came the proper noise, Willies "Get along sir" being drowned in Dois "Bad boy Akin is, bad boy Akin is Doi Dame very angry at you." It always ended in Mary hauling him off screaming & kicking & every head in the Fort at doors & windows looking to see what was wrong. Mary & he are good friends, he is very civil to every one, but I tremble for Marg^{ts} going both on his account & my own, I mean that she was not like a servant having a good deal of education & knowledge of what was good & bad— Mary seems very anxious [to please] & I am sure will do. I have been trying to frighten her into great cleanliness by holding out scurvy & such things but hitherto she has been quite fastidious, & both washed & dressed herself very *spry*— All the blankets are aired twice a week upon a rope in the yard. She cannot understand why I am very much vexed just now having been balked in my intention of sending you a shawl which I had made arrangements for doing, but M^{rs} Gladman walked in & asked me to send for 3 silk gowns for her & daughters. As I had assured Harg^{ve} that I w^d need no more money he had closed his account, so I had to alter my list & want a good many things, as I send money before hand & M^{rs} Gladⁿ wont give it till after the goods arrive. As Harg^{ve} is not very good friends with Gladⁿ I did not say any thing about it to him. But he & his wife have always been very kind to Willie & I will never be able to do for her as much as she did for poor Doi, so I have resolved to wait for one more year quietly. Old Rory MacKenzie asked Harg^{ve} to send for 3 silk gowns with a sufficiency of trimmings, for 3 grown girls, 3 very large & very fine shawls, 3 very fine black lace veils & I was to fix the colors of them. H. brought me the note & I warned him that if he put it into the Secre^{ys} hands the bill w^d be £30, as it wound up with, I wish all to be of very superior quality. So I sat down & stated that the shawls sh^d be £3, the

veils one, & the silk a good quality. He lives at an Inland post, where no one ever goes & is 70, yet has not made or at least saved money. He is a Ch. Factor, his wife a pure Indian, and he has not been out of the country either home or in Canada since Uncle Jⁿ entered the service, more I believe than 40 years ago. He pays £280 two hundred & eighty pounds a year to MacCallum at Red River for the education of children & grand children. I shall finish my letter on the envelope.¹

There are two unfortunate Buffaloes on their way to the ship, where as usual they will meet their doom. Two years ago there were 3, all of them were literally hunted to death. Wilson sent all the Indians & Orkney men to catch & put them on board the Schooner. Instead of enclosing them in a circle, the whole party chased them through the Fort till the poor creatures lay down. I never saw such a hunt, & no one attempted to enlighten the people. One died before it got on board the ship, the others immediately after. Next news was a lamentation from London on the difficulties of a sea voyage to these animals. The anchor had not been raised when they died. But of course *we* said nothing about their experiences on land. This year long instructions have come as to their treatment & provender.² I daresay they will do, as at any rate M^r Wilson will not require to chase them, having each an immense log of wood tied to its collar, which it can scarcely move with. Every step they take they must drag this weight after them so that they will not run much.

We have a great horned owl in the nursery yard. I never saw such a curious looking creature.

M^r Gladⁿ went off in a small canoe yesterday. He w^d overtake his family [who] had gone away in loaded boats, in 3 days. They were all ill with colds when they started & I suppose are hardly better [illegible] but they are so accustomed to *loud* coughs headaches & fainting fits that they dont mind them. Twice during their short visit here the youngest child who is 3 years and a half old, was found by his mother on her awaking in the morn^g

¹That is, on the inside of the larger sheet of paper which the first sheet was wrapped in.

²Simpson to Hargrave, June 28, 1843: "Pray take care that a sufficient quantity of Hay be shipped with them likewise Water, & ask Captain Herd to get a comfortable House built on deck for them."

in a *dead* faint quite stiff & cold. She never sent for the D^r nor appeared at all anxious, tho the boy was ill afterwards. He got a doze of calomel, & her cousin D^r Bunn the $\frac{1}{2}$ breed D^r at Red River having assured her that the practise of giving salts or senna afterwards was a fallacy & quite useless she uses calomel on all occasions, from the facility with which it can be administered. I was very glad when they left us, for I am this summer not living in my own house, which has been repairing, having shrunk & changed from the frost. I am therefore in Uncle Johns old house, & M^{rs} Gladman had a part of it so that I could never keep *Doi* out of their premises, and what I hated more, am separated from him at night, as he remained in the nursery. I shall have to make a bold effort & insist on getting to sleep in it when Marg^t goes in case he sh^d get obstreporous in the night time. It will not be quite ready for a week after the ship goes, but I must either get Beppo over here or else I must go there. He is always here during the day as will be seen by my letters for I am sure they are very confused. Miss Allen at the Red River School is the only person who at all resembles me in her composition. She writes in the midst of 35 girls of all ages. I had a letter from her 2 days ago. She appears in great spirits & thanks Providence for sending her here.

The schooners I mentioned to Papa have not yet been heard of, the ship only waits for their arrival. If they do not come before the 20th she must sail without them, but one or both may return at any moment & the furs have only to be taken out of them & put into the Prince Rupert, so that she may sail on a few hours notice. I enclose a note for Flora. Of course she will see this & the other letters so that I need make no apology for writing such a short one to her. It is different writing here & at home. Give my kindest love to Hector. Poor Mary never ceases praising him. I have a faint hope that if he comes to this country he may Winter here, on his way to the Columbia, as they sometimes send them this way. M^{rs} Webster is still at S^t Andrews but has been very ill. Her daughter wrote me & sent some pots of lemon cream along with books for *Doi*.

A poor man who came out by the ship fell over board of a boat while unloading Prince [Rupert] & was drowned. He left a wife & 2 children in Orkney who will be wearying to hear from him.

LETTERS OF LETITIA HARGRAVE 171

The man who was ill of Typhus fever is getting well again, very unexpectedly. It was in Papas letter I mentioned him.

Let Flora read this letter if you please as hers is so short. Give my love to all *enquiring* friends. Give my love also to Lockie & Alex^r I would be very glad if they would write me. My letter if I were to send one to them would not be entertaining. Every boy Mary sees white or black is sure to be either like one or other but she maintains that even that *great nobleman* D^r Kellock is not so beautiful as Hector. She thinks the D^r a paragon & I daresay he is above mediocrity a good way—

Hargrave unites with me in love to you and believe me ever my dear Polly

Y^r most affect^{te} sister
LETITIA HARG^{VE}

44. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

York Factory 14th [to 17th] Sept^r 1843

My dear Mama

All my letters are now closed & every thing in readiness for the ship, w^{ch} only waits the arrival of one or other of the schooners. Mary tells me that the shoes & Husky things I sent by Capⁿ Bolton 2 years ago reached y^u, I meant one pair for Flora as I promised to *repay* those she gave to M^{rs} Anly for me, but as Bolton only offered to take things when he came to say good bye, I had no time to write along with them. I now send 2 pr. If Polly will choose one, Flora will please accept the other. I have sent a pair of silk stockings for Polly, they have never been on but I fear they may be old fashioned, the gown will perhaps alter for Flora. I was very anxious to make you some night caps & meant to have sewed edging for three, but the pearl was ravelled so I only sewed enough for one, & have put narrow lace on the other two. I fear they will be large, but I know from experience that they will be strong & good wearing caps if not very neat— I have also sent you a small French collar, w^{ch} I presume must have been fashionable. It came with the ship along with some others. I knitted a pair of black silk mits for you, principally to show that I devised the thumbs myself. Marg^t will give them all sewed up

in a towel to M^{rs} Worsley. She has plenty of room in her trunk & I do not like to ask her to take another box—

Harg^{ve} is in such an unsettled state from fear about the vessel that he bids me say he quite neglected to thank Papa for the immense *leg* of ham last year. The one Mary brought has not been boiled yet as there are so many people here, but it looks very well, & Mary was surprised to see it come forth looking as good as ever. Willie & Doi are the only ones who have tasted the jam & we were all astonished at the sight of such large gooseberries & currants. I shall not open the strawberries till I see if Dug^d comes. I kept a pot of the last, & Willie & Bep finished it when we saw Dugald was not coming in July. I feel sure he will get some of this. I have still 12 pots of the marmalade sent by M^{rs} Webster 2 years ago, & I have a little of yours too— It keeps so well here, indeed it gets clearer & clearer. They cant sup marmalade as they do jam. I wish you saw D^r Gillespie & Willie handing it back & forwards to each other. None of the others seem to care for such things. Willie sits on my right side, D^r on my left, the table is oval so that they are quite close to each other. Beppo was generally there last winter & used to horrify Harg^{ve} by remarking when he stopped eating “Doi hard now.” Hard is still his phrase for enough.

I told you last year that M^r Nivens¹ the ship D^r was a *Puseyite*. I had a letter from him this season, written in very low spirits. He found on his return from this that his eldest brother had died of fever, and a sister 20 years old, was married last Christmas under very promising circumstances, caught cold & died before Easter. He sent a Noahs Ark for Beppo. I have written & after consulting Willie & Harg^{ve} have asked him to send me some vaccine matter, for I am afraid of small pox. Scarlet fever & hooping cough are both at Red River for the first time. Nivens is of Guys Hospital too, great on mesmerism w^{ch} I see by the Argus has made its way to Glas^w.

If I go home I think I must take my servant Nancy who is a decided somnambulist & holds long & intelligible conversations in her sleep. When she first came she spoke nothing but Indian. She has not been here 3 months & now she never speaks a word in that language always English & well can she speak it. It is

¹See introduction, p. xxxviii.

rather curious that she sh^d change her tongue in her sleep. M^r Roberts was telling a story of M^r Cochran the minister, he could not get his own interpreter on one occasion, so he asked an Indian who said he was competent. The text was "The soul that sins shall die." Things went on well till Cochran came to explain that the death meant was a spiritual one as the soul was immortal. The Interpreter had never heard of immortal but he had of mortar so he took upon himself to inform them that the soul that sins shall be made *white mud* that being the nearest translation for mortar. The Indians quite comprehended, and as it is not often that they do so, they gave a grunt of satisfaction.

M^r & Miss Evans were here for nearly a week. She was very quiet while with me w^{ch} was only during meal times & after tea if any one was with me. She is very pretty, but there are awkward stories about her artfulness & M^{rs} Finlayson from liking her very much has changed till I shudder almost at the way in w^{ch} she writes. M^r F. writes that Evans has encouraged his nephew John F. to enter into a clandestine engagement with his daughter & has extorted a promise not to acquaint *him* with it. You will see that there is likely to be little truth in this for neither John nor Evans w^d be likely to tell it. I don't believe that the Evans are any great things, but I am very sure he thinks a great deal too much of his daughter to do any thing of the kind & from all I hear of John I suspect he w^d not bind himself. He is now independent of his Uncle & has always been dutiful. But the Ross women will make things as bad as they can.

M^{rs} Cowley went with her husband to Lake Manitoba in July—was [there] a year— She appears to have been as happy & contented there as elsewhere— When Roberts got his recall Cowley was desired to return to the Settle^{nt} & assist Cochran, so on the 10th July arrived at Red River with M^{rs} C. in a horrible cart. She had travelled 150 miles in it without road, just over stumps stones willows hills & hollows. On Sunday the 14th she was confined of her first child, a boy. The child was distressed wth his bowels, but I hope will do well. She was quite well again. Her father is a solicitor at Marlboro. Cowleys father & brothers are *great* builders in Gloucester—

M^{rs} Webster & Lady Simpson write me that they expected the Finlaysons home but M^{rs} Fin. never tells me a word about it

altho' she writes by every oppor^y & Harg^{ve} is as ignorant. I suppose Duncan is to have charge at Lachine as M^r Keith has retired & Sir George is to pass this winter there himself, to keep it till he gets some one for Red River. I am certain the Finlaysons will go back when he returns to Canada next summer. When we may go, heaven only knows. I suppose we will be kept till Harg^{ve} gets desperate as there is no one able to take York at present except Willie or Gladⁿ. They w^d not give it to Gladⁿ & at any rate he will be away. There is no one in the country who could be made accountant if W^m were to get charge— He w^d not take it as he w^d have the whole store & counting house work on his own hands. I think myself that Harg^{ve} will not be able to stay here after Beppo goes, he thinks that *I* will hinder his going, but I know he will save me the trouble. I suppose fathers always like their children but I never saw any one so anxious about & fond of them as he is. He *must* go at the latest when he is 6 & a half but I have no hope that we shall leave this before that. I don't mean to say that Harg^{ve} spoils Beppo but he is the first thing he sees in the morn^g & the last at night. It is impossible to foresee what may be in reserve for him or us but I see no prospect of getting away sooner, & very melancholy I often feel about it. At the same time I w^d stay here for 20 years if it were at all necessary to get sufficient means for educating him & setting him out in the world. I wonder at M^r Christie and M^r Charles who have nearly forty thousand pounds bringing their sons back to this country. Old Charles writes Harg^{ve} to tell his son that he has only his own services to depend upon. The curious part of it too is that he has lost his wife & two grown up daughters since I came here & a 3rd M^{rs} MacCallum at Red River is supposed to be dying, and a younger, a child, is in very bad health, & yet he keeps the others well down. When the accounts were brought him after his wife's death, he made a great noise about the number of chickens she had consumed, and at the price charged for them. Miss MacDermot from whom she had purchased them, defended herself agst the last accusation, by saying that she w^d have got a shilling for each had it grown to be a cock or hen and as it was M^{rs} Charles wish that it sh^d not get time to do so, she must get the shilling whether the chick was worth it or not.

Tell Flora that I got a letter from Miss Loudoun by the ship

dated 25th May but none by the June arrival so that M^r Buchanan must have been in error. She knows of no other means but the ship.

15th Sept. A strong south wind & no schooner— A boat came from Churchill, & M^r Harding writes that the one that left us nearly 6 weeks ago had not been seen nor heard of on the 8th of this month. Willie has been in, quite knocked up. I wish the ship was away on his account. We had a Roy¹ Artillery man Lieutenant Lefroy¹ here in July taking magnetic observations, on behalf of the Royal Society. M^r Burk came by the ship to make collections of mammalia for the Earl of Derby & plants for Sir W^m Hooker.² He was here for 3 weeks & started for the Saskatchewan where he will Winter & cross to the Columbia in Spring. I never heard him speak of any thing but wild beasts. He had just returned from a three years residence in the field in Africa & was great on lions alligators serpents rhinoceroses &c. The Hottentots must be wretches. He had hard work to get them away as if he turned his back for a moment they were all off to the nearest place they c^d get drink & he had to pursue with all beasts, dead & alive. When they fairly got into the savage country they worked well, & as he brought numbers of live carnivora they had plenty to do to keep them in food & water. These 3 years not a drop of water did he see, he lost a companion who was killed in attacking a rhinoceros, a number of lions, & 8 giraffes besides very many much more valuable. I mean that the lions & giraffes died, not, as must appear from my composition that his friend attacked them. He says that the rhinoceros is much worse than the lion, w^{ch} is quite harmless in the day & he tamed several, but the rhinoceros is always fierce & a horse must be both fleet & strong to get away from him. The Hottentots received payment for their 3 years services on their return to Cape Town. One very sober steady one as the others thought, intimated that he w^d remain at a country place to rest & not spend all his money & goods drinking. So all the rest begged that he w^d take care of theirs for 2 days, & in they went with the sum they intended

¹See W. S. Wallace, "Sir Henry Lefroy's journey to the north-west in 1843-4" (Royal Society of Canada, *Transactions*, 1938, section ii, p. 75); also *Dictionary of national biography*, vol. xxxii, pp. 399-404.

²Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, England, appointed in 1839.

to regale with. They were mortal [drunk] all the time agreed upon & then set out to rejoin their friend, but he was off & never seen after, so that they had to go home to their families without a thing to show for all their hunger thirst labour & danger during 3 years & 4 months. M^r Burk is evidently not a literary character, as a proof he was speaking of the alligators watching till the buffaloes came to drink when they pull them down into the river & *drowns* them. I dont think he will publish his travels. I forget how many species of serpents he got, but he had 18 hundred insects several thousand plants 500 animals & many birds— He found 77 species of plants *here*, none new, no mammalia, and a Wavie or white goose w^{ch} the Earl wanted— M^r Lefroy is to winter in Athabasca.

16th Sept^r Harg^{ve} has got a letter from Severn. Abbis Shabbish the murderer had been following a family as is supposed to kill them. The Indians crowded into the Fort & w^d not leave it they were so frightened. Under these circumstances M^r Cromarty¹ seized him & was sending him here prisoner, when just as he was going into the boat, an Indian called *Towers* knocked out the wretches brains with a hatchet, then took the body to an island & burned it. The Indians have their own laws and we dont interfere, but from the terror he had inspired Cromarty was compelled to send him here for the Indians w^d have starved rather than venture out of the Fort. He had been threatening Towers when he took courage.

M^r Finlaysons Fort [Ft. Garry] had 200 panes of glass smashed by a thunder storm. Our Beacon for guiding the ship into the river was also destroyed. The woods are perpetually on fire all round. I wonder the Fort escapes as our Outlook & belfry are both pretty high.

M^r Roberts & Willie were here at tea last night. Willie was so ill that he c^d not work all yesterday, but there is not much to do. The wind has changed to North after 10 days south, so that the last schooner will get home soon, & the accounts will be closed.

M^r Mason² one of the Wesleyans who has hitherto been

¹John Cromarty, interpreter, was in charge at Severn House.

²The Reverend William Mason married Sophia, daughter of Governor Thomas Thomas, and she died in 1858. For an account of her work see Burwash, "The gift to a nation of a written language" (Royal Society of Canada, *Transactions*, 1911, section ii, p. 15-18 *passim*).

stationed at Lac la Pluie has married Miss Thomas, sister to our half breed fellow passenger. She has £1000 but her mother is a pure Indian & the most notorious drunkard at Red River. M^{rs} Gladmans eldest daughter is married to her brother. She had a baby early in July & in Augst her husband wrote M^r Gladⁿ & intimated that "Harriett sent her love to her mother & was sorry she must be disappointed this Fall as she was so taken up with the child that she could not write." M^r Thomas had allowed at least one opportunity to pass before he wrote & the mother was in misery from doubt &c. M^r & M^{rs} Mason are to pass this next year at Norway H^c— Peter Jacobs & family at Lac la Pluie. Evans & Mason quarrelled when they were some 700 miles separate, I dont know how they will get on as next door neighbors. M^{rs} Mason is 28 years old & only left school when her brother married. I hear she is very quiet & inoffensive.

They say that M^r MacCallums school is going to wreck. Children who have had duck geese & venison 3 times a day are supposed to suffer from breakfasts of milk & water with dry bread, severe floggings, confinement after any fault & the total want of the following meal. The boys & girls are constantly fainting but MacCallum wont change his system. Many girls have got ill, and as he makes them strip off their Indian stockings & adopt English fashions it is not surprising. They must take a certain walk every day, plunging thro' the freezing snow. They wear Indian shoes, but without the cloth stock^{gs} or leggins over them the snow gets in & I need not say that the feelings one undergoes are not comfortable. Then if the mothers are not legally married they are not allowed to see their children. This may be all very right, but it is fearfully cruel for the poor unfortunate mothers did not know that there was any distinction & it is only within the last few years that any one was so married. Of course had all the fathers refused, every one woman in the country w^d have been no better than those that are represented to their own children as discreditable. The curious thing is that M^{rs} Gladⁿ who has had her own sorrows with a husband & who literally was deserted by hers, yet she despises those who have been turned off, as much as any one & spoke with horror of 2 Miss MacKenzies¹

¹Margaret and Isabella, daughters of Kenneth McKenzie of the American Fur Company. Margaret married Peter Garrioch, and an incident with regard to her

who are at M^r MacCallums. Their father left the service & their mother & went into the American Fur Comp^y some years ago. The 2 girls were sent to school & of course prohibited from having any intercourse with their mother who is in a miserable state of destitution. The poor creature sits in some concealment at MacCallums with deers head, or some such Indian delicacy ready cooked for her daughters, & they slip out & see her, & as she is almost naked they steal some of their own clothes & give them to her. This is a fearful fault & the young ladies suffer for it, as if any else could be looked for. M^{rs} Gladⁿ reviles the poor ignorant Indian mother, but I think the father is a much more culpable character leaving children to be brought up by a starving woman who nevertheless w^d be always kind to them. At 13 years old taking them from her & placing them where they heard her called any thing but genteel cannot be a very good plan.

17th We have just returned from church & heard that the last schooner is at the mouth of the river only waiting for the tide to bring her up. It is a bad morn^g strong northerly gale & snow. Hargrave has not been able to sleep for some nights past & has begun to read the papers. The May Witness of course but he likes the Britannia best. Perhaps, some one will write M^{rs} Worsley what to do with the gown & things. Willie has written her a long letter in reply to a still longer one from her. She is much more confidential to him than to me. I wrote John twice but he did not answer except by a message thro' W^m, so I think it needless to put him to the expense of postage & take his own plan of using an intermediate channel. The red ink is so bad that I fear you will not be able to read my letters. Be so good as tell Flora that I am much obliged to her for her long letters & if I had any thing to write about mine would not be so short to her. I trust that both Polly & she are well. The Indians are terrified for the barking dog & dancing man. Bepp delights in exhibiting them. His eyes are perfectly well again.

M^r Hackland & the last schooner have arrived, they did not see the first and I fear there is no hope of its being in existence or its crew of six men several of them having wives & families in Orkney. A lame Indian is here with his 3 wives. He & one of

marriage is the basis for the story told by Alexander Ross in his *Red River Settlement*, pp. 238-9. Isabella married Cornelius Pruden.

them are now sitting by me. I had nothing to give them but a piece of short bread w^{ch} they eat. I then gave them a great piece of white sugar w^{ch} was also devoured but they sat still. I next remembered seeing a lump of pemmican in M^{rs} Glad^{ns} end of the house so I brought & gave it to them. At last Gibeault came in & asked what they wanted & they demanded some writing paper.

I must now make up my mind to finish & with many thanks for all you have done for me this last year I remain my dear Mama with kindest love to the boys

Y^r most affect^{te}

LETITIA HARGRAVE

45. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

York Factory 29th November 1843

My dear Mama

. . . Doi Dame in particular is thriving beyond what I ever ventured to hope. Mary & he are great friends & she is very kind to him—and it is wonderful to me how she accomodates herself to his whims. He makes Nancy & her tie a string with an empty thread reel at the end of it to the back of their gowns, & then they must run about the nursery for a q^r of an hour with the cat after them, every night except Sunday, or he will not suffer a thing to be taken off him. I did not tell you that when Mary came on shore she had a great black cat with her which she humbly proposed to keep in the nursery. I can give you no idea of the battle I had before I succeeded in dislodging it, & that was only by telling Gibault who shuts him down in a cellar every night when he is closing the house doors.

Willie was much longer in getting well after the ship sailed than usual. Indeed it is only within the last 3 weeks that he has been able to eat. The D^r & he have again taken to fox hunting & visit their traps 5 miles distant every morning before breakfast. Indeed sometimes they sleep near them all night in a Winter Encampment not a human being nearer than the Fort & they not near each other.

Five of the crew of the unfortunate Schooner arrived at Churchill about the end of Sept^r. She had struck a rock on the

coast 120 miles north of Churchill. The crew left her with 4 feet of water in the hold & getting into the boat one of them fell into the sea & was drowned. His body was washed on shore & buried by the others who had to swim on shore as their boat swamped & all they had in it was lost. They managed to get to Churchill and from there to York, but the vessel will be useless & the cargo is supposed to have been carried off by the Huskies. . . .

Ever y^r m^o affect^{te} daughter

L HARGRAVE

46. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

York Factory 30th March 1844

My dear Mama

The spring packet is to start today being 2 days earlier than was intended the 1st of April being the usual time. The Indians who take it to Oxford will bring back the Gov^{rs} papers when I hope there will be one from you. We have all been perfectly well since my last letter except Hargrave who has been suffering as usual at this season from the Winters confinement, but even he has not been ill—plagued with headache &c, and as he goes out into the store Monday for the Summer I hope he will get quite well immediately. Doi Dame is the old original, being greatly bigger fatter, & of course cleverer than ever. He has not had a moments ailing since I wrote. Willie too is & has been perfectly well. The Dr. & he have given themselves up to fox-hunting. Wm. has made a snow encampment on Nelson River & sleeps among his traps. He got 11 in one night, but the Dr. caught 18 in 24 hours. Willie will not trade them. He gives them to M^r Wilson but he tells him to give the value to poor Indians. Not so M^r Gillespie, *he* takes all he can get for his skins.

Mary Clark is quite well & it seems miraculous that she is so, having fallen down a hatch into a cellar under the kitchen in spite of all Gibeault's cautions, bright daylight and the use of her eyes. She asked the Cook for something, he opened the hatch to bring it up from the cellar to her. While he was getting it she fell down, how I have never found out but she came in to me with her brow cut & declaring her ribs were broken. The D^r told her if her ribs

were broken she would not tell it so briskly. He said she had got a bruise on the side and gave her a plaister. She tortured me with the account of her sufferings & boasts of her strength but w^d not put on the plaister till I got fierce & said she must, when she produced 2 round morsel the size of a shilling, the rest she had burned. The D^r had given her a very large one but she said there was just a piece about that size sore, so she stuck on the scrap very solemnly. This happened during the Christmas week & she has been quite free from pain since the end of Feb^y. She gets on wonderfully. I find a great difference between Marg^t & her, but I always knew I would never have one like her again. I am sure you will remember the shock we all got 6 years ago when Papa one day left the key in the cellar door and we found that Mary had availed herself.— You always blamed Marg^t Macgugan for misleading her. I often thought of that after I had asked for Mary as I cant keep either wine or brandy always in security & if I were ill there would be no attempt to do it at all. But she has had frequent opportunities since she came & she has never looked at it. The keys have been taken from Gibeault & he is abstemiousness itself now. I feel quite easy about Mary. She is very conscientious in her own conduct but I believe she w^d let another cut y^r throat & not tell you of their intention. Doi is very fond of her quite as much so as he was of Marg^t. Nancy is beginning to be useful and altogether I feel less terror for what may happen next winter than I c^d have believed possible after all the self-reproach & misery I have endured. I suppose I shall be confined early in Nov^r. But I need not say any more about this at present. ✓

Two shocking accidents have happened this winter. M^r Lee Lewis a son of the comedian shot his right hand off & injured the arm so much that he is coming here to have amputation performed as soon as possible. His life was in danger & he attributes his safety to the presence of mind of M^r Peers who tied the artery & doctored him well. M^r Lewis has charge of Mackenzies River where the accident occurred. A poor old Chief Factor, Rory MacKenzie fell down a hatch like Mary & broke his leg. He is 72, so it will not mend again. He has been here with his Brigade every Summer since I came. Scarlet fever is raging at Red River & half way to Norway House w^{ch} I daresay it has reached by this time. British cholera too nearly killed M^{rs} Ross & M^{rs} Evans

particularly the latter whose husband writes that for many days he despaired of her life. Miss Evans was laid up at the same time with it. The people here say that she is to be married to D^r Donald's cousin M^r MacLean. I daresay she is not so bad as they will call her but she is no great matter. I am sure that in some respects her mother is downright unprincipled. I was very glad when they gave up writing to me. M^{rs} Finlayson told me she had dropped corresponding with them, but as I was not aware of their having aspersed me I always answered their letters, meeting their My dear friend with dear Madam till I suppose they got sick of it. I don't know why M^{rs} Finlayson dislikes them so much but I suspect she has heard that M^{rs} E. went about saying she had [said] such and such things to M^r Evans. Even if M^{rs} Finlayson had been very communicative to the Minister, he had no business repeating conversations which she must have intended to be confidential, but I know very well that the stories M^{rs} E. told me about M^{rs} F. were entirely her own invention.

Dugald will be making ready for starting if he is coming across. I will not know whether he is or not till he lands at York, or else someone in his stead. I had letters from M^{rs} Finlayson & M^{rs} Gladman in Jan^y. M^{rs} F. does not say whether she has any expectation of leaving Red River in Summer, & M^{rs} Gladⁿ is pathetic over the slaughter of 12 of her hens—the dogs eat them. She had promised me a large keg of eggs when the boats came down but I suppose I will not get them now. We have only 3 hens. Mary calls for them at the stable and says they & the cock look well after their 7 months confinement in a cell off the oxen's apartment. M^r MacLean writes Hargrave that after giving his protégé M^r Hamilton a fair trial he finds him irreclaimable & will only wait the answer from him to write the Gov^r & demand his recall or dismissal. Harg^{ve} wrote back that as the boy had only 2 years to serve, he wished they would let him wait till they expired & then let him go quietly. He is in MacKenzie's River—M^r Wilson sprained his ankle dancing on Christmas night. He did not make his appearance at the Mess table till well on in Feb^y & limps even yet.

It has turned out that the crew of the lost schooner were such a set of cowards that no wonder the vessel was lost. The five able bodied men were frightened for a Husky family a man his

wife & their 2 boys. They thought they were plundering the wreck & did not try to prevent it, but M^r Harding writes that instead of pillaging they saved every thing they could while the crew ran for their lives.

We have had a very good winter. I am certain that Doi & I have been out every day except 2 since I wrote— We go out in the Carriole after breakfast & take a long walk after dinner. He trots along the sledge track to a *Lob* stick a mile & a half from the Fort & back again, without appearing at all tired. The thaw will soon set in occasionally & we will be confined to the platform, but this morning the thermometer was 22 below ° & the weather windy & cold. There have been great numbers of deer, the Fort hunters have brought in between 60 & 70, besides what the Indians have used themselves.

I have not a word of any sort of news nor will there be any till after the Meeting of Council when we will know where people are going & who are applauded & who admonished. The Gov^r is to be at Red River & Harg^{ve} seems to think he will be here, but I suspect he w^d rather *praise* York than visit it. The people constantly maintain that every year will be his last trip into this country. Why they say so I cant imagine, as I can see no symptom of his intending to give it up. He will not get two thousand 3 hundred a year so easily. There are a great number of commissions to be given but we will not hear of them either till he comes. Harg^{ve} is as sure of a 2nd. share as a promise can make him.¹ There will be another Factor & 5 Traders.

I hope that Papa and Flora have got well over this winter & that Polly soon got better after the ship sailed. I am also very anxious to hear of Hector, whether Papa wrote Sir George & what was said. I hope to hear all this within a fortnight, but there is a chance that the express may not have got forward. I have seen a great many deaths in the Glas^w Argus that I knew, among others Sydney Lacy. I have always expected to hear that poor M^{rs} McBair was gone, I dont know why. Miss Allen has sent me a few flower seeds to sow in my room in boxes, but I cant get a handful of earth for more than a month to come. She sent me mignonette seed last year but a huge crop of chick weed alone

¹See p. 159.

came above ground. It flowered & looked green & that of itself was something. . . [illegible]

Willie says he has nothing particular to say. Hargrave & he got pretty tipsy last Sunday night. After dinner they sat down to a very large case bottle of port & drank till the gentlemen came in to tea—when H. bid Wm. come in afterwards & finish it w^{ch} they did to my surprise. Of course they were not nearly mortal, but they talked me asleep. The best of it is that I got orders to ask Willie & the D^r to supper on Saturday night in place of Sunday as Harg^{ve} thought it would be improper to drink champagne on Sunday!!! which will be Beppo's birth day.

Mary & Nancy had gone over to wash when Hargrave told me he must have my letters today & Doi has harrassed me till I hardly know what I am saying. I had my country letters all written but I did not wish to write yours till tomorrow. I have not sent one home to any other person. Mary begs me to say that she does not mean to write her friends. If they ask about her you will say she was never better, nor better off, in her life.

I suppose the D^r & Nathan Harvey are rich now since their brother's death. Even the shoemaker will be a gentleman. Hargrave & Willie join me in kindest love to you Papa Polly Flora & the boys & I ever am My dear Mama

Y^r mo. affec^{te} daughter

LETITIA HARGRAVE

47. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

York Factory 9th Sept' '44

My dear Mama

The packet was brought on shore on the 12th Aug. I was very glad to hear that y^u were all pretty well, and I am sure y^u will rejoice to learn that Willie will be the bearer of this letter to London. He will be detained a day or two I suppose, but will most probably write himself— Papa's letter enclosed will explain how he has got leave, & he will himself tell you why. We are all well here. I have been perfectly so all summer & able to endure

M^{rs} & the two Misses Ross, and M^{rs} Charles.¹ Miss Jessie Ross is 21—and is going home to a Londⁿ boarding school, just to see the world, her mother says, for she has got plenty of “book learning”—M^{rs} Charles came out the year before me, to help her brother’s wife, in the management of the Red River school, but neither wife nor sister ever bothered herself, indeed they are not capable, and Miss MacAllum was married last Winter to old M^r Charles whose first wife died 3 years ago, so that M^r Charles & M^r MacAllum are brothers in law, as well as father & son in law—M^{rs} MacAllum being a daughter of M^r Charles.

I had a ten days visit from a M^{rs} Hunter who came with her husband² in the ship. He is a Church missionary & has gone to Cumberland, I rather think they are the best that have come yet—The lady certainly is greatly above any thing that I have seen yet, & very knowing too—I shall be very glad when they are all away, as I have a [word torn] Fall’s work before me, in the sewing line & sometimes think not so long to do it in as I had supposed. I must be all ready by the middle of next month. If it is so soon, I must console myself that the earlier in the season the better. I was obliged to give Mary a solemn admonition & told her that I often hurt myself thinking on her forgetfulness & indifference—Gibeault being over in the Summer kitchen, I am entirely at her mercy as Nancy is always out with *Doi*. I ring the bell & bid her bring a fire. Perhaps y^u will think I am exaggerating, but it is a fact that she has very often & this last hour in particular set off & altho she is doing nothing earthly, she forgets to bring the unfortunate kindling. She is very kind & long suffering with *Doi*, & not a soul but Gibeault & myself know of her infirmities in the way of forgetfulness &c. When the men come back to the house it will not matter. I will have

¹Chief Factor John Charles married on February 1, 1844, Margaret Macallum, sister of John Macallum, the head of the Red River Academy (H.B.C. Arch. E 4/2, fo. 90).

²The Reverend James Hunter was sent out by the Church Missionary Society to the Indians of Cumberland Mission where he laboured until 1854. When the diocese of Rupertsland was formed in 1849 he was appointed an archdeacon. He served in Red River until 1864, when he returned to England. There he had a brilliant career at St. Matthew’s, Bayswater, where he remained until his death. See W. B. Heeney, *Leaders of the Canadian Church* (second series, Toronto, 1920), pp. 79-85.

Nancy to take care of myself when I am helpless, & with watching, I trust earnestly that she will manage the Baby, if all is right. She is not at all daunted & I am sure will take great care—

Dugald has written home & of course his letter will reach y^u as soon as mine. He is now a Yankee citizen having secured a square of ground in Oregon territory or city. He favored M^r Gladman in Willies presence & mine with an account of the cost & the energetic means he had resorted to in order to *oust* another Yankee who had very coolly squatted on D's lot— He had been offered a thousand dollars for it before he came here, but declares that no money w^d be an equivalent for such a possession, so he refused to part with it. He *looks* as if he w^d not be the sufferer in a bargain, as I never saw such acuteness in a face as there is in his. The morn^g he arrived W^m & he came into my house to breakfast at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 7. I felt stunned when D. appeared, he was so different from all of us. He is thin & speaks so fast & gesticulates with every limb in his body. Every turn in a story begins with "Well Sir" (to me)— Willie was very pale & unwell that day & they sat together on the sofa D. rattling & *pouring* out, with such vehemence, & Willie looking at him so patiently & calmly with his white forehead & thin hands, he seemed like an angel beside D—& I felt such an inclination to rise & support him as if he had been a child.

I am sure D— is a very fine soul & I had a sore heart parting from him. I saw as much of [him] as I could for he had business to do & I was always afraid to keep him in case he w^d be behind. The post will not bear more paper, so I shall write by W^m in Pollys letter.

Y^r m^o affec^{te} daug^{tr}

L H—

48. TO FLORENCE MACTAVISH

York Factory 9th Sept^r '44

My dear Flora

I received both y^r long letters & am sorry to say that I sit down with the prospect of replying with one very short one— Will you inform Flora Kelly that Mary Clark thinks she is the

greatest traitor she ever saw or heard of— *Dan Mooney* wrote her that Flora had possessed herself of 2 of her chairs & that she asserted Mary had presented her with them. If Mary ever gets home Flora will get a volley. I thought her intellect if Mary's brain can be called so w^d have given way under the shock. She speaks now on no other topic— She has got all her wages saved except 6 shillings for shoes, £20 in our hands & she has turned such a miser I yesterday found out that she had asked poor old *Cucum* the floor scrubber who has a cripple husband & 2 children to feed & clothe, to give her leather, & the poor woman *did* it, whereupon I gave Mary a good lecture & told her that the Indians must either buy or steal their leather & that if she ever took any thing whatever from one again, I w^d at once take her before M^r Harg^{ve} & M^r Wilson. I ended by giving her $\frac{1}{2}$ a skin to pay the woman with. She promised hard & begged me not to tell Harg^{ve}, & concluding with, If I had known she w^d get such a big piece of beautiful skin for the bit trash she gave me, I w^d have burned my tongue before I asked for it. Y^u w^d be astonished at her fatness—she cant stoop without such a puffing & her gowns wont nearly meet, after all poor Marg^{ts} alterations last Fall. She is wearying for the ship to sail as she has to make Miss Ross & M^{rs} MacAllums¹ bed every morn^g & she considers this hard work. M^{rs} MacAllum came to my door on Sunday morn^g to breakfast at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 8— I got a shock on opening it to see her dressed in an amber silk gown trimmed round the capes with broad blonde. She is the very image of Miss Gordon the staymaker. Miss Jessie Ross sleeps in the same house with her being under her charge, on the voyage, but they both eat with me— Jessie dresses in great style too, a sulphur colored mouseline de laine & a length of spry ribbon flaunting in ends from her neck—

Mary Hamilton tells me that M^{rs} Worsley has changed her house but the old lady says nothing about it herself so that I dont know how to address her letter—

I hope the Frees are a little subdued by this time— The Catholics here are going it very hard. One poor soul of a priest² was hurrying to Cumberland to get the start of M^r Hunter, &

¹Letitia probably meant Mrs. Charles, formerly Miss Macallum.

²Jean Edouard Darveau. See A. G. Morice, *The Catholic Church in the northwest* (Winnipeg, 1936), p. 17.

was found drowned, his canoe upset and his 2 Canadians likewise drowned. Dugald had another, a *Mon^r Thibaut¹* in his boat, he writes me from Norway H^e that Mon^r T- put great confidence in him & entrusted him with a flask of Holy Oil consecrated by the Pope, to be delivered to the Bishop across the Mountains. Poor D- had his own trouble with it, as all the people set upon him for a little to oil their guns with, & I rather think M^r C- Trader Harriot w^d get some by the way he speaks. Four Sisters of Charity² came up to Red River & are to settle there & teach young ladies to speak French, & M^r Evans says Catholicism. M^{rs} Hunter told W^m & me that altho' M^r Roberts had never seen her husband, yet he wrote him a long letter recommending him to have nothing to do with his clerical brethren in this country, that M^r Cochran the head of the Episcopal was a very bad man & his wife *one devil*— M^r Mason was here he is a Wesleyan, & lives at Rossville. Well he spent the entire ten days he was here reviling Evans for telling fibs, cheating the Indians, aspersing the Comp^y & cheating him of his allowances from the Wesleyⁿ Society. Harg^{ve} let him rage away but did not introduce him to me, which M^{rs} Ross tells me he felt very much. He has by the last oppor^y sent H.^{ve} a copy of Mosheims Church hist^y in 5 vols. w^{ch} he begs him to accept as "a trifle of esteem"!!! I remain with best respects for y^r prosperity y^{rs} affec^{ly} J W- Mason. Y^u may suppose what an upsetting of the Eng^{sh} language the said W- Masons sermon generally is. Mary C- did not understand ten words of the discourse & Losh keep me Yon's not a bonny man. The Romans keep their opinion of each other to themselves, and they seem the wisest, & I think will hold out. M^r Evans rushed to MacKenzies River by a short cut to be before hand with Mon^r Thibaut who as I said was taking his ease in Dug^{ds} brigade.

W^m will give y^u a pickle of Ds hair for Mama I cut it off and altho' it is both thick & long I was afraid to take much in case he w^d grudge it. He is such a dandy wears an embroidered black

¹Jean-Baptiste Thibault. Ross to Hargrave, July 26, 1844: "Thibeault came out here, having obtained permission to go up in the Saskatchewan Brigade and commenced forthwith to turn our *Pagans* into Catholics, in which he certainly had every prospect of speedy success had I not put a stop to this work."

²See Healy, *Women of Red River*, p. 112. Letitia probably had this news at first hand from Wemyss Simpson, who had been in charge of the party of nuns from Lachine to Red River in the spring of 1844, and who then came on to York.

satin waistcoat &c. I have also sent a specimen of my own & Dois— Mine is quite a new cure having grown completely since my illness—

Will y^u look at W^{ms} shirts & see if the buttons hold on, as I c^d not get them with more than 3 holes & these so small that I sewed them with a very fine needle & thread. Dont despise the cotton, it was the best there is here, & is called superfine.

I have still to write Mama & a supplement to M^{rs} Websters letter she has left S^t Andrews & gone with a Tutor to Balmuir her sons place. The 2nd boy had hurt his eyes by the explosion of some fire work. After being weeks in darkness, the sight of one eye began slowly to recover but a cataract is forming on the other. His poor mother is in great distress.

With kindest love

Ever y^r m^o affec^{te} sister

L HARGRAVE

49. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

York Factory 24th [to 27th] Nov^r 1844

My dear Mama

The winter packet is just preparing and I have the good fortune to be able to tell you that your namesake and granddaughter was a month old the day before yesterday & is a very fat able-bodied girl. Mary rejoices over her preformances in a bath every morn^g. I had hard work & threatened to get up & bathe her myself before I could get Mary to leave off spunging the little soul by morsels á la Cambus Nathan, but at last I prevailed & as baby lay full length floating up & down & was perfectly silent, Mary confesses that I am right. Nothing could be kinder or more anxious than Mary is about her, she would cram her perpetually if I would give in, & one day when she prevailed on me for peace sake to stifle the hiccough with more drink, she assured me the Lord w^d reward me for my goodness to the poor helpless innocent & its hungry heart. I was not ill more than an hour & a half; indeed not more than $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour. When I sent for the doctor at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 10 I had just gone to my bed, & he astonished me by saying that the child would be born in an hour. I think she made her appearance

about 12 noon on the 24th of October— I got well immediately & was up on the 8th day. Baby has not had a moment's pain. Poor Doi Dame got a shock when he saw her. "Mama's in her bed, Mary is holding that little boy & nobody is taking care of Doi Dame," was his lamentation to Gibeault. He is very fond of her now & declares vehemently that he will tell nobody that the little sister is a dirty pig. He too is perfectly well, and already improved in looks & *manners*.

There is no news here for we have heard from no place since the ship sailed. Foxes are pretty numerous & the D^r has at last managed to entrap a fine black one. He is hunting as hard as ever & has all Willie's traps & a hut at North River where he sleeps about 3 nights in the week. I suppose W^m is with you now. I will weary for his coming back if he must come for I sh^d like to hear about you all. Dug^d was to try to get across that he also might hear but I have no expectation that he will get permission—I have not been out since the even^g before baby was born & there seems little chance of my going. What the cause is I cant conjecture but I got perfectly well on Tuesday after, & remained so for 36 hours when I became as ill as I ever was, which altho' not at all bad has made me feel very weak after continuing three weeks. The D^r comes every day & says he will give me some acid drops to put an end to it, but he w^d rather not—I am however to take them tomorrow. I am quite astonished at it for it is quite new to me. Even with writing this little bit I feel faintish & giddy, but am told it is not dangerous—

27th— I left off yesterday but Harg^{ve} says he must have my letter today so I wrote in bed as the D^r has given me the acid drops at last, & desired me not to get up today. He says there is nothing the matter except that my room has been kept too hot. I think I have fought too soon & too much with baby, as Mary has not lost even $\frac{1}{2}$ a night's sleep with us. But we will soon be quite right again & it is a great comfort that she is such a thriving child & that my breast is quite well this time. This is the 7th letter I have written & I wish I had made it the 1st but I flattered myself that the longer I delayed the better both it & I should be.

The weather is rather cold, the glass being often 26 below ° & the fall of snow has been extraordinary, but Doi is out every day. After the fashion of the boy in the Prince of Wales book, he sits

in an old candle box with "Candles" printed in large letters on the back & nailed onto sledge runners & drives 2 huge dogs himself, Nancy standing behind on the runner, & there they gallop till both Doi & old Boxer the leading dog are tired. He is still as smart as ever. Baby's forehead & eyes are very like his but her hair is very dark at present. When she first made her appearance the D^r said he had never seen a child born in such a beautiful state as regarded its skin, but I rather think she will be pretty black.

While I was writing an unexpected packet has arrived from Red River ordering Hargrave to build boats as they have determined that the Arctic Land expedition shall go on this spring under the charge of an Orkney gentleman D^r Rae from Moose.¹ The shop at Red River has been broken open & £400 cash stolen. M^r Christie has called in all the notes in the Settlement & had them registered.²

A great misfortune has befallen poor M^r Evans. I daresay I told you he had started to contest the Chipweyans with a Priest. But he has shot poor Thomas Hassel his interpreter & came back from near Isle à la Cross to Norway House in great agony of mind. It happened in a canoe. An Indian who had been using M^r E.'s gun left it cocked. He (M^r E.) took it out of the cover & was getting a cap out of his pocket to shoot ducks when it went off & the contents went into Hassel's shoulder. His head sunk on his breast & he fell on the bar of the canoe & died instantly. They landed & dug his grave & poor Evans read the burial service the best way he could. This happened on the 11th Sept^r. M^r E. is still inconsolable & his statement ends by his saying that he will never have peace more. There were 2 Indians & their depositions were quite distinct & corroborate M^r E. This is all I have heard.

¹See *Dictionary of national biography*, vol. xlviii, pp. 151-3.

²See Ross, *Red River Settlement*, pp. 333-4. Macallum to Hargrave, December 3, 1844: "A veritable burglary was committed at F. G. malgré its high walls and strong gates, its Jailor & Jail. Of course the whole Settlement was in a commotion. There were . . . anxious looks and pale features for who would dare to perpetrate such an act but a strong body of Canadians? But alas . . . for unmanned walls and cannonless turrets! After all our wonderment at the reckless daring and cool courage of the burglars, it has turned out that a poor, unarmed, unclad, Red Lake Indian was the thief. The stolen cash was yesterday relodged in the old box."

The packet must return immediately & I must finish with the promise. Hargrave is well but rather crabbit just now on account of the A. L. Exploring as he has a large craft to be called the "Flora" & a schooner of his own on hand, & as he has only 2 boat builders he will have to leave off his own & proceed with the new ones. I hope Papa is well. I will have many a weariness before y^r April letter comes.

With kindest love to Papa, Polly Flora & the boys I ever am
my dear Mama

Y^r most affectionate daughter
L HARGRAVE

50. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

York Factory 29th March '45

My dear Mama—

I wrote y^u last Nov^r in very bad spirits, & have wearied for this opportunity to come, that I might inform y^u that we are all well. My ailing at that time ended in an attack of inflammation of the kidneys. It was not at all severe, but continued for a good while, as I was confined to bed & exclusively to a diet of barley water for a fortnight. I went out to walk for the first time on New Years Day & am now perfectly well, and growing a tremendous size with fatness. I trembled all the time I was ill for baby, but she was not at all inconvenienced, as I had enough milk all along, & she lay beside me night & day both of us sleeping like stones from the effects of the henbane the D^r gave me— She is a nice little soul, nothing but crowing & laughing being ever heard out of her mouth. The 22nd of this month was a fine day & I sent her out for ten minutes for the first time in her life. The weather is bad again & I don't know when she may get out again— She is as big & active as Doi was, but she has not cut any teeth yet— Two are on the point of coming but are not through yet— She has escaped any cold or pain of any description, but she *slavers* to a very troublesome degree, her bib being changed six times in an hour during the day.

Doi Dame is a big boy now—& a pretty good scholar— He has finished reading the book you sent him as a lesson, but he

will never give over admiring the prints in it. Hargrave made me rather agst my will, give him some religious information. He was very sceptical & declared that if I did not show him the ladder on w^{ch} he was to go to Heaven, he would not die. I got him quieted by showing him the wings of the angels who are standing by the little boy who is saying his prayers in the little book, & he is now quite satisfied. He can repeat the Lord's prayer perfectly & indeed has done so for months back & can say the first part of Watt's Catechism. But it is in *profane* songs that he excels, having all Marys & M^r Wilsons, by heart from "Come down stairs pretty Peggy oh" to Here we are met 3 Merry boys—

The northern packet arrived on the sixteenth, a little starvation going on in Mackenzies river but nothing out of the way— Another half breed clerk in charge of a Post has been shot across the Mountains, but the murder was committed by an Indian— I wonder they take half breeds into the service. One of them evidently has had the copying of D^r MacLoughlins public letter, for a more ludicrous piece of manuscript never was seen full stops & capitals every where but where they ought to be & a really pathetic composition of the D^{rs} completely destroyed. For instance a poor man M^r Charles Ross died there, as the document says, of Inflammation of the Bowels *In Him*. He had been a good clerk for 20 years & only got his Commission last Summer. Our Mull cousin M^r MacLean is blowing out against Sir George for giving charge of MacKenzie's river to Murdoch M^cPherson in place of him & he vows that he will make a noise about it.¹ We did not hear from Dugald, but if he had not been well the D^r w^d have said so— I had a letter from M^{rs} Hunter. They had lost the half of their stove in the Lake,² & the poor creatures have

¹Hargrave to McLean, April 1, 1845: "I am very sorry you have felt so deeply the awkward position in which the late arrangements of McKenzie's River affairs had placed you as to have rendered it necessary in your mind to address a circular to your friends in explanation of the expressions which you might chance to have let drop touching your future position there. Believe me my friend your word required no corroborative evidence to add to its value or weight in my mind."

²Hargrave to the Reverend James Hunter, June 1, 1845: "I regret exceedingly to learn that you had suffered so much last autumn from the carelessness and incivility of your steersman and that by his culpable neglect you had incurred such a severe loss. I beg that you will mention him particularly to Mr. Harriott

passed the Winter in a miserable half made hut without a stove— She is to be confined early in May without a Christian but her husband near her.

The Indians who take this Packet will bring back the Spring express from Oxf^d. I hope to get a letter from you & perhaps from Willie. He will have left you by this time— I pity him coming back to this country & fear he will be more uncomfortable than ever— Harg^{ve} tells me that if he cannot get away in the fall of 47—he will send me home with the children, as he can neither keep Doi Dame after that nor send him off alone— It is a long time till then, and I hope he will be able to come if we are all alive. He w^d be a miserable man without poor Doi & the little sister. They will not learn harm here I think but a boy will learn nothing— Joseph is sitting sewing a pack sheet bag with a darning needle & wont let me write for clapping & kissing me to keep me as he thinks in good humour, that I may not interrupt his labors, on account of its being Sunday— The packet is to start tomorrow in place of the 1st April and I am writing while his Papa & the D^r are *sitting after dinner* in the Mess room arguing on Phrenology & Political economy, our two grand topics on Sundays & holidays.

the Coy's officer in charge of the Saskn. Brigade or to Mr. C. F. Rowand under whose orders the person is serving and I feel confident that either of these gentlemen will award to him a most proper and exemplary punishment. Should the place have been marked where the portion of your stove was lost I still have sanguine hopes that it may this summer be recovered as some of the Saskatchewan Half breeds are skilful divers and by a proper search it may still be restored to you. It was most unfortunate that some of the Coy's officers were not travelling with you in the boat. Many of our ignorant and degraded servants, Canadians & Half breeds when left to themselves are apt to take advantage of the good nature of gentlemen whom they may find at their mercy, and unacquainted with the habits and modes of discipline found necessary in this country. I remember when my worthy friend the Revd. Mr. Cockran first came into this country, I happened to overtake him on his way to the Settlement and found this poor gentleman actually as busily occupied in the navigation of the boat as the vagabond crew themselves, while at night he had to pitch his own tent, cut and collect his own fire and when all was done, the insolent knaves had the audacity to take his kettle off his fire and use it for cooking their own victuals. The people belonged to one of the Red River free freighters who was with them but they had fairly got the mastery of him and to ensure the worthy clergyman's comfort I took passage in the same boat and assumed the command of it. In short, voyageurs like [illegible] to feel their masters and I would never recommend strangers to travel alone with them when such can be avoided."

Harg^{ve} flatters himself that he is both liberal & orthodox, the D^r *professes* to be orthodox alone, & startled Hargrave by informing him that Chyle was a secretion of the stomach, bile of the liver, & Mind of the Brain!!! So much for Orthodoxy & Port wine I suppose.

This is W^{ms} birthday & they will miss him on Tuesday night when we celebrate Doi Dames— Mary is quite well & is a woman mountain. Baby admires her extremely however & we are all on the happiest footing. She has not quite lost her eccentricities, as Doi came in to my room the other morn^g laughing like to suffocate himself, & told me that he had asked her for a drink of milk in the night & she had held the candlestick to his mouth in place of the jug, the candle lighted too. She gets on much better now. Till she got the Baby to keep she was stupefied for want of occupation. Now she gets up every morn^g at q^r past 5, & bustles about surprisingly. Doi is mad for her & wont suffer Nancy to bathe or dress him, so that as Baby leaves me soon after 6, he has to rise & be ready before I ring or he gets into Nancys hands, & in the battle that ensues he has often fallen when quite dressed into his own or Baby's tub & been wet to his skin— I know of 4 times that this has happened. He falls backwards in a sitting position, & the moment he gets out resumes the contest, without change of countenance, resisting the unfortunate Nancy all the time she is changing his clothes— Mary's whole time is engrossed in marching up & down the room with Baby & when she sleeps she sits & reads newspapers. I almost never see her but when she comes for a drink. She never cries night or day— I have not begun to feed her yet.

I have had no opportunity of hearing from M^{rs} Finlayson since she went to Canada but expect a letter next packet— The Expedition has again been knocked on the head by the death of M^r G^e Taylor¹ Land surveyor at Red River, who was to have

¹See p. 20, n. George Taylor (1800-1844) was, according to information received from his family, educated at Aberdeen University. He entered the service in 1819, and served as clerk and sloopmaster at York Factory until 1827. He married Annie Hemenway of Red River, and his family lived at York until 1833, when they moved to Red River. Taylor was appointed surveyor to the Red River Settlement in 1836, which position he held until his death on November 18, 1844. He has been confused with his father, Captain George Taylor. For biography see Fleming, *Minutes of Council*, p. 459.

qualified D^r Rae for taking charge of it, that is taught him astronomy &c. to enable him to find out where he was as it appears he cannot "take the Sun" or Moon yet—and there is no one now who can instruct him, so that he will have to go to Eng^{ld} & learn this Fall, and the affair will be put off for another year. Hargraves part of it is accomplished, as the boats are built & provisions ready— D^r Rae is a Stromness man & has been at Moose for some years back— All the Ross tribe had hooping cough, but have got well over it.

M^r Evans was terribly overcome at first, after shooting his interpreter. It is a wonder no more are killed they are so careless with guns. By his own statement poor man I w^d think he had showed great carelessness, hauling a gun out of a bag at a mans back, altho' he knew that it had been on shore to shoot ducks, w^{ch} escaped before poor Hassel could fire so the gun was brought back— M^r Evans is distressed but takes no blame to himself, but rather credit for bearing so well the trial he has endured, in having been made the instrument of an inscrutable Providence &c. I wish I had that consolation in afflictions less directly caused by my own errors or mistakes—

Hargrave is busy preparing his papers for the Council. There is not much prospect of his being allowed to attend in person altho' he is a C.F. I daresay he would like a trip to R. River once more before leaving the North I hope for ever. I do not mean that I dislike being here, quite the reverse as far as I am individually concerned, but I w^d be miserable if Doi Dame were sent away on the world, and we could hear nothing of him for 10 months— Hargrave will probably tell Papa more about it by the ship or at least he will have heard by that time from Sir G—

M^r Wilson has been very ill, and lived for 3 weeks on barley broth without salt scraps of mutton cut down in it. This he flatters himself gave him strength & brought him round. I thought of the Crickets fate while indulging a similar taste but said nothing as it is doubtful whether *Panum* has a blood vessel in his body. I am sure he has nothing to put in it as I never saw such a scarecrow. The D^r is in great spirits— He has invited Harg^{ve} out to dine at his hunting house when the packet goes, of course H. provides the materials including cigars— M^r Christie¹ is fully

¹William Joseph Christie (d. 1899), son of Alexander Christie. See "The Christie family and the Hudson's Bay Company" (*The Beaver*, August, 1923, p. 417); Cowie, *Company of Adventurers*, pp. 164-5.

fatter than I am. M^r Ballentynes health does not agree with York. I suppose he will have to change. The Mull boy M^cArthur¹ is a horrid looking affair. He told M^{rs} Ross that he had never heard of Sir Walter Scott.

As usual I have no news nor any thing entertaining to tell you. Hargrave is better this Spring than I have seen him after his Winters labors. You would be amazed to see what a size he has grown.² I often get frightened when I think of him but he is greatly rejoiced himself & seems a good deal happier than any man or woman I ever saw— Baby threatens to be large. I said to Mary that I hoped she w^d not turn out a giantess on our hands. Mary said Well Maam Giantesses is very handsome. I said “a shilling to see an elegant one dressed in a white muslin gown & a gold watch.” I shall feel very unsettled till the packet comes in in case there may be no letter. I hope that Papa & Flora are keeping well and that you are pretty strong, but I will hear every particular from W^m.

Will you give my love to M^{rs} Loudoun M^{rs} Worsley & the Hamiltons if you have an opp^{or}. Hargrave joins me in kindest love to Papa Polly Flora & the boys—Doi especially to that nice man Uncle Alex^r. Mary sends her compliments and I remain my d^r Mama

Ever y^r mo- affect^{te} daughter

L HARGRAVE

Will y^u tell Polly that the little knitted boots fit Baby beautifully. She is like to break her back trying to get foot & all into her mouth.

51. TO DUGALD MACTAVISH SR.

York Factory, 1st September, 1845

My dear Papa,

The ship arrived on the 9th & the packet came on shore on the 11th Augst. The whole Fort had newly recovered from Influenza. Willie had it but was not laid up. Hargrave did not attend the

¹Neil M. McArthur, an apprentice clerk.

²Ballenden to Hargrave, May 2, 1845: “Cummings and others gave me awful accounts of your increased bulk, but 2 cwt. is terrific. Big Donald [Ross] would be jealous of you, and even John George [McTavish] would give a nod of approbation.”

Mess table one day & had a bad cough & headache for long. Mary & Gibeault and Nancy all had it & were off *duty* together. Doi Dame coughed & sneezed a good deal & baby & I got off better than any other.

There were no passengers by the ship except Dr. Smellie who has come to take Mr. Gillsepie's place & a half breed clerk. The Gov^r & Council had decided that a Mr. Clare,¹ an experienced accountant should come here but he has gone to Moose instead, & Willie has had only the usual help. Mr. Christie was here at tea on Sunday & looked as if he had come out of his grave with whiteness & an Irishman who has also been all Summer in the office is not much better. Willie looks well & says he never felt better in his life. The passengers going home are Miss Allan, the Red River Governess, 4 school boys, & Mr. Harding a clerk who has been 20 years in the service w'ch he is now leaving in a rage. Council made him a present of £100, & informed him he need never make application for further employment. He has been at Churchill for a very long time & has now hardly the appearance of a human being, having seen nothing but Huskies, except when our Schooner made her annual visit. I was astonished by his sending me in by Willie a large piece of cut chrystal. I can't guess what it is intended for. He says he got it out for a tobacco box, but never used it. Joseph thinks it is ice & wonders that it does not melt.

Dugald was here for six days. He looks well & much stouter than he did last time. Mr. Harriot came before him & told me that Dug'd had had a very bad fall from his horse in crossing the plains of the Saskatchewan last Fall. Mr. H. had seen him tightening his girths & immediately after a horse galloped up without a rider. Mr. Harriot turned to see whose it was & on riding back saw Dugald lying on his face insensible. The horse had stumbled over a badger hole & Dugald had been thrown over his head & had pitched upon his own. They took some time to carry him to the river & put him into one of the boats, when Mr. Harriot bled

¹This was James R. Clare, and soon after this he came on to York Factory from Moose. He became a chief trader in 1856, a chief factor in 1862, and was in charge at York for a time. He married Margaret, daughter of Thomas Sinclair. In 1866 he was in charge at Fort Garry, but he died that year while on furlough in the Old Country.

him & he recovered but was confused & his memory gone, till at last he fell asleep & continued so all day. When he awoke he was perfectly collected & as well as ever. I wonder he does not hurt himself, as he had a fall the day he last reached Red River & was useless all the time he was there from the lameness it occasioned. He rides for fourteen hours a day sometimes galloping the whole time on wild horses. He gave me an account of a journey he made lately to Walla Walla. Started from Vancouver alone & rode 14 hours. When he stopped he was so fatigued that he fainted in an attempt to swallow a little water. His neck was cut with the sand driven agst him by a strong wind. He lay still where he had fainted & slept for some hours. Mounted next Morn^g. & rode all day & found himself rather better that night. After six hours riding on the 3rd day he reached Walla Walla quite well & active. He expects to be out next year & as usual will attend Council at Red River. Nicol Finlayson told him he was to have one of the 7 shares to be given, but I believe Nicol is mistaken as we have not heard it from anyone else. I hope he will get his commission as he is angry at not having it before, & has determined to make arrangements with Dr. MacLoughlin to give him employment over there & if he does not get it next year to pitch into Mr. MacKenzie,¹ (who is certain to have it & who came out with them & is a nephew of the Finlaysons) & leave the service. I spoke to him & advised him not to be rash but I find he told Willie that his resolution was taken. Uncle also wrote & strongly advised patience, but Dugald is quite sick of the country & even if he gets his commission, I think he won't stay longer than the 4 years required to secure his retiring interest.

A chief factor & 2 Traders have retired this season & gone to Canada so that there will be more elections the year after. Hunting beaver has again been put a stop to as the silk hat manufacture has pushed them out [of] the market. This will be a great loss as they have been what they call nursing the country for many years & the people at home not getting beaver were driven to try silk & now that there are plenty skins they won't buy them.

Hargrave has already written & I suppose wd. tell you that the private sale of buffalo tongues has been put a complete stop to. I think he will be able to get some next year from the Free Settlers

¹Hector McKenzie.

at Red River. He has been allowed to go there & will leave York the end of Feb^y or 1st March in a carriage. Willie is to take charge so that his going will make no difference to me. Mr. Evans is here. He came down to Christen Baby, having only married his daughter to Mr. MacLean the day before he left Rossville. He came off in the morn^g. & his daughter & son in law were to leave in a canoe for Canada by the afternoon.¹ I have been plagued with people all the time I have been writing my letters and when I began this one I sent Nancy to wash my bottle & get new ink. I thought it looked very blue but flattered myself it w'd get black. I find however that it is what is used for ruling paper, but my breast is sore, & if I were to begin another to you I might not get it finished, I am so often interrupted.

Hargrave is busy sending off the last inland boats, those from the Portage La Loche Mackenzie's River. The ship will soon be ready too. The expedition to the North is to go on next Spring. Dr. Rae is expected every day & is to Winter at York. Cap'n Franklin expects to meet him, but I believe no one expects such a thing but himself. The people here laugh at the Government part of the matter & think the officers & crew must have been "too hot at home".

Mr. & Mrs. Charles who went home with Willie are not to return again. They had paid £500 for a lot of land & a very fine house at Red River. The house is now finished & furnished & all ready for their reception and the whole must be sacrificed as no one there has money to buy it, or if they had, would not stay there any more than Mr. Charles. His son in law, Mr. Macallum has quarrelled with Miss Allen whom he accused of laziness, & eccentricity. She is very angry & brings as heavy charges agst him, going the length of saying he is deranged. His school has fallen off to nothing & he told her it was her fault. She retorted & told him it was his own, & that he was so despotic & overbearing that both boys & girls were terrified for him, & as their parents are all very indulgent they take them away. I know this was the case with Mr. Gladman's children & Dr. Todd, but I did not tell her so, as Mr. Christie at Rd. Rr. has taken up her cause & is battling with Mr. Macallum about her. He has now got a half breed

²⁷⁰For an account of the McLeans' trip from Norway House to Sault Ste. Marie, see Ballantyne, *Hudson's Bay*, 2nd ed., pp. 213-60.

girl as Governess¹ & no one seems to envy her the situation as between the impudence she will receive from her old school fellows & their master's ill temper, she will have a hard task.

Doi Dame is sitting at my side singing as loud as he can bawl for joy that Miss Allen & Miss Sinclair have gone out to attend a marriage at the other side of the Fort, for he hates them both, as they won't let him make a noise. Mr. Hargrave has taken the box you sent & is keeping it till he has leisure to teach Doi Dame how to use it. He reads pretty well & I hope will be able to write a sort of letter next ship time. The Meal has not been opened yet as we have still a good deal, nearly half of the old stock, which is perfectly good. It stands in a small room with 3 stoves round it so that I don't think it would spoil for 4 years. The herring are very good & as rich as if newly salted. As Hargrave will be away half the year, I have had the cask unpacked & half put into another with new pickle, which when Winter sets in will be put in a frost proof cellar, & in Spring in the ice house, and there will be quite enough for next Winter too. I tried some already & they kept perfectly so that you need not send any next year. Our potatoes only lasted one month, & we shall have none till the boats come again next July. Our garden last year only produced a few very small red cabbages about the size that cresses are & of course quite green. Mary made 6 pickle bottles full with chili vinegar & that was all we had except a few miserable lettuces. The *great* garden is on the opposite side of the river. Willie, Dr. Gillespie, Doi & Hargrave went across to see it the Sunday before the ship sails came & they say they could not see even red cabbage this season so that it does not seem to improve by cultivation. We got the papers about yr. way of baking bread² & have much reason to try it but as yet have not had time. Gibeault has left us & his successor is a stupid Orkney man.³ Mr. Evans tried to teach him to make a Yankee thing called

¹This was Jane, the daughter of Roderick McKenzie, senior. Her nieces recall her account of the incident, and of how reluctant she was to take Miss Allan's position at a moment's notice.

²See introduction, p. xcvi.

³Hargrave to Finlayson, August 7, 1846: "I have just been obliged to dismiss both of last winter's butler and cook for the same crimes and have had recourse again to old Garson, and a half breed lad as waiting man." The man's name was Clouston.

Salt risings— 3 half pints of warm water & milk with a tea spoonful of salt. Flour is then stirred in till it is a paste when it is put before the fire to rise & when it does so is used like leaven. The bread is perfectly sweet but Clouston has spoiled the only batch he tried since Mr. Evans showed him the way.

Dr. MacLoughlin has lost the £500 a year¹ he had for managing the Pugets Sound Comp'y's affair & a board was appointed last Meeting of Council composed of Mr. Douglas Mr. Ogden & Dr. MacLoughlin to take the joint charge of it. It is supposed that the Dr. will retire, & settle in that Quarter. Mr. Gladman & his large family went down in Canoes to Canada last Month. He had taken the precaution to entrust his resignation to Mr. Ross to be handed in to Council in case there should be any proposal to send him across the mountains. As he expected, the Gov^r ordered that he should go, so immediately Mr. Ross gave in the paper, & Mr. G's resignation was accepted & passage provided. I believe they will miss him. He did not know what he would do when he got down, but as he has some land there, he was to stay on it with his brother in law till he looked about him.

Dugald has sold his property for 900² dollars. It cost him a thousand in law expenses alone, as he had a free grant of it from the Yankees. I think he is not very vain of this affair, as he refused 1000 dollars long before he had suffered much loss from lawyers.

I have a great idea that you will not be able to read this letter. I enclose, Mama, a little of Baby's hair to show how the colour has changed. With kindest love & best thanks for all the trouble you have taken with so many things for us, I ever remain My dear Papa

Your very affec'te daughter,

LETITIA HARGRAVE

52. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

York Factory 5th Sept^r 1845

My dear Mama

The letters gowns & caps all arrived safely and the jars with the exception of the marmalade w^{ch} was broken on one side but

¹See Rich, *McLoughlin letters, third series*, pp. lviii-lix.

²*Ibid.*, p. 293.

I got most of it saved. Mary says the jar had a thin part that had given way. I need not say how much obliged we are for all y^r kindness. Mary is pleased with her gowns. She fell on the platform & I am sorry to say sprained her arm very badly & has not been able to use it since, altho' 7 weeks ago. She can carry Baby now & dress her but for 4 weeks she could not & I had to get up at 6 & bath & dress her, besides keeping her very much in the day time during w^{ch} she knocked me so hard wth the back of her head that she made my breast sore. It plagued me for a fortnight & all of a sudden became so bad that I had to take to my bed. The D^r has lanced it 4 times & tells me that he thinks it is in a good way now— I had a sad time while the inflammation lasted, but nursed through it easily & Baby is as far from being weaned as ever. M^r Evans came here expressly to christen her & the ceremony took place on Sunday the 31st of Augst. She behaved well, rolling about on the carpet & playing with her Highlander all the time. She thought the water an excellent joke but pushed with all her might when M^r Evans (much to Mary's distress) made the sign of the cross on her brow— We called her Letitia Lockhart. Hargrave likes the last name & it will convince the world that she is named for y^u & not for me— Miss Allen had arrived the day before & was godmother— Doi Dame was delighted with the whole affair & they are very fond of each other. She cant walk nor even stand but is never off the floor, getting along by rolling over every turn taking 5 minutes to complete & recover from the exertion— She is the best child I ever saw has 8 teeth & never cries unless greatly bothered. Her hair has become very fair & her skin is as white as Doey's—

Willie has just been in here. He is quite well & says his work is almost over. He will tell you all about himself— I thought he looked much better when he came altho' they had a miserable journey— I had wearied for the coming of the canoes, & had suffered more than I can tell, from the month of April when y^r letter had reached us, & by the same packet an intimation (almost a formal one) of poor Hectors death. Till Uncles letters arrived a few days before W^m, we knew nothing more, & between terror for the effect it might have on Papa & you, & half hopes that there might be a mistake I passed the time till the end of June when all was confirmed. I felt far more for y^u than for him, for

he is in Gods merciful hands but to you the blow must have been fearful.

Dugald came a week after W^m looking very well— He expects to be out agⁿ next year. He spent the greater part of the time here in my room & Doi Dame & he had a great packing of sauces & hot pickles to be used when he reached the Buffalo country— I had some & was glad he thought them worth the carrying— He lamented that there was nothing to eat at York but generally dined, as I thought very well wth Doi & me, & then marched off to join the general mess— He takes great credit to himself for never forgetting what Papa once told him, that he should never fill his wine glass beyond a certain height— Perhaps I may be partial, but I think I never saw any one who had such a perfectly open candid look as Dug^d. I suspect he is not very like other people, his curiosity being insatiable, & his friends the Yankees have removed any embarrassment he might have felt in gratifying it. He questions away without hesitation— D^r MacLoughlin & he are still as good friends as ever. I am sure he will go home as soon as he can get leave.

Uncle wrote us all very kindly, I had also a letter from M^{rs} Mactavish— M^{rs} Finlayson says she is greatly improved & appears very happy— Elizath & Frances¹ had spent some days with M^{rs} F at Lachine. She says they are very fond of M^{rs} Mactavish & promise to be fine looking girls— Frances is very stout, & all three remind her strongly of our family— They were going to a boarding school in Canada when their step mother wrote. Sir George seems to have annoyed the Finlaysons² very much by his resolution of spending the Winter with them. His wifes whole mind seems taken up with the poor little girl Augusta, her second daughter, & M^{rs} F— thinks that it is only her care that keeps her alive. She is 4 & cant walk— Willie says Lady Simpson looks quite broken hearted— I pity her living in the bustle the Gov^r will keep about her, with such a charge. M^{rs} F says he is very fond of Fanny now— She was the only one when I saw them & he paid no attention to her. La Chine house is small & the rooms ill contrived so that they were all wretched

¹These were the daughters of John George McTavish and his deceased wife, Catherine Turner.

²See introduction, p. xciii.

when I heard— The Gov^{rs} sons¹ are coming into the service now. We had one here an apprentice post master (the lowest grade for a gentleman) in Summer— Wemyss Simpson² is also at York, & he never took the slightest notice of his relative further than intimating to some of the clerks that he guessed who that fellow is. Wemyss is Lady Simpson's youngest brother— The apprentice

¹Letitia was evidently not aware that the Governor already had at least three sons in the service, George, James, and John. His son James had accompanied A. C. Anderson from York to the Columbia in 1842. In 1843 James and John were both at Fort Nisqually, in the Columbia Department (H.B.C. Arch. D. 5/9). In 1844 they recrossed the mountains. His son George was in Honolulu in 1844 (H.B.C. Arch. D. 5/10 and 12); and in 1861 a son named George, presumably the same one, took charge of Sir George and Lady Simpson's daughters, Augusta and Margaret, on a journey from Quebec to London, England (H.B.C. Arch. B. 134/b/19, fo. 618). Margaret Taylor's son George by Sir George Simpson (Morton, *Sir George Simpson*, p. 159) lived most of his life in Red River, where he was known among the French (his mother having married Amable Hogue) as a man of some education and means. It would seem that Sir George had not only two daughters named Maria by different mothers (Rich, *McLoughlin letters, second series*, p. 103, 4 n.), but two sons named George by different mothers, and two sons named James by different mothers. The son James who is mentioned by Morton as serving at Frog lake in 1885 (Morton, *Sir George Simpson*, p. 160), was not Margaret Taylor's son, but, by his own evidence, that of Sir George and a Mrs. Keith; and this is the James Keith Simpson referred to by Letitia in this letter as just entering the service. He was born in 1823, and evidence points strongly to the "country wife" of Chief Factor James Keith as his mother. He stated that he was a delicate child, and that his mother had difficulty in rearing him; and this accounts for his late entry into the service. On medical advice in England he was assigned to the Saskatchewan District, because of his asthmatic tendencies. He married a woman of mixed blood named Patenaude. For this information on James Keith Simpson, I am greatly indebted to Mr. Z. M. Hamilton, secretary of the Saskatchewan Historical Society, and to Mr. Angus McKay of Prince Albert, under whom James Keith Simpson served at Frog lake. James Keith Simpson died at Onion lake, Saskatchewan, and was buried in the Church of England cemetery there. I have to thank the Reverend Jules St. Pierre, O.M.I. of the Holy Rosary Mission at Onion lake, for the following copy of the inscription on his tombstone: "Sir [*sic.*] James Keith Simpson, Ayapiw [reposes here], Died December 28th, 1901, At the age of 78."

²Wemyss McKenzie Simpson (1825-1894), youngest of the seven sons of Geddes McKenzie Simpson and Frances Simpson. He entered the service in the Montreal Department in 1841. In 1844 he was sent from Lachine to Red River in charge of the first party of Grey Nuns to go west. He served for short periods at York Factory, Oxford House, Norway House and Red River, in the Northern Department; he was in the Southern Department in charge at Fort

post master has gone to the Saskatchewan— They always met at Mess table. M^{rs} Webster writes me that Elizth Simpson the 2nd unmarried sister eloped last Winter with a son of Abbott the brewer— He had twice asked her fathers consent & been decidedly refused so in despair she left her own house without telling one of her family & was married without even the knowledge of his relations. Her father is very angry & had refused to see her. She had often gone to his house to see her mother & sisters, but never when he was at home— M^{rs} W says his connections are unexceptionable & he is rich. M^r Simpson thinks he is or was dissipated but I dont know with what reason— M^{rs} W blames the father for holding out— She is 24 now & there are still 4 unmarried.

Miss Allen did not know till the end of July that she was to leave the Academy at R^dR^r. M^r Macallum & she have had a pitched battle. He told her she was careless & lazy, had extraordinary peculiarities of manner w^{ch} made her the laugh of her school girls & was not sufficiently accomplished to carry on the education of young ladies— 3 days after this a half breed girl of 19 Miss MacKenzie walked in as governess & Miss A. came off in the boats— She is really very queer & foolish & a complete old maid cant bear to be put out of her way & is at this moment sitting beside me snoring sound asleep with a volume of Punch in her hand— Such a cockney I never saw— I have a pupil of hers a Miss Sinclair¹ staying wth me this Winter. Her father has gone to take charge of Churchill took his wife & 7 younger children with [him]. He very bluntly & coolly asked Harg^{ve} to allow his daughter to stay for a year in his family— Harg^{ve} as

Coulange, in 1848; at Sault Ste. Marie in 1849-51; at La Cloche in 1851-5; and again at Sault Ste. Marie from 1855 until he retired, about 1865. He became a chief trader in 1852, and a chief factor in 1862. He married Annie, daughter of Captain Ironside of the Indian Department, at La Cloche in 1853. On her death in later years he married her sister Eliza. Like his father, he had fifteen children. He was twice elected to represent Algoma in the Canadian House of Commons; but on his second election in 1871 he resigned almost immediately in order to accept the appointment of Indian Commissioner to negotiate a treaty with the Indians in Manitoba. He resigned as Indian Commissioner in 1873, and retired from public life to Sault Ste. Marie. He died, while at Fort Monroe, Virginia, on March 31, 1894.

¹Margaret, daughter of William Sinclair (see letter 32), and his wife Mary McKay, daughter of Marguerite Wadin McKay, wife of Dr. John McLoughlin.

coolly said he could not say & came to tell me. I spoke to Willie who said she was very quiet & would be in no ones way—so I told Harg^{ve} that unless he objected I was willing to let her sleep in the nursery till he went to R^d R^r & then she might get a bed in my room. As Harg^{ve} had only objected on my account, he told M^r Sinclair that if he had any particular reason for wishing it she might stay. So he informed him he had got a letter from Chief Fact^r Rowand¹ asking him to give his eldest daughter to his son John. Neither father nor son have ever seen the young lady but the proposal was accepted & she is to proceed inland to Fort Pitt on the Saskatchewan (where her future husband is a clerk & in charge of the Post) next July & be married by a Priest or Methodist who is thereabouts— Mary & Doi Dame abhor her I presume for intruding on their apartment— I had almost forgot to say that she was only a week in the house till I had to give our cook a volley for getting up a flirtation wth her & Harg^{ve} has already taken her to task for trailling about the Fort & walking & giggling with some apprentice clerks— Wemyss Simpson is the only stranger now here & he leaves for his charge Oxford House tomorrow, so that the York people not being given to flirting there will be quiet till next June.

I feel very sorry that D^r Gillespie is going away— They say he has a curious temper, but he has always been perfectly patient & agreeable to me & I can never forget how he has worked with the children when they were born & how obliging he has always been— Mary is in great dismay as “altho’ the new man has a better colour in his face, still he does not look very genteel, and M^r Gillespie is the very picture of D^r Cowper in Glas^w. Some people said he was an ugly man but my feyther said he was a real D^r & when men are very learned their faces *goes* that way, with the raptures they’re puttin into”—&c.— M^r Gillespie I believe is going home to his father in Ediⁿ. D^r Smellie is the son of a Free Church minister in Orkney & a regular M.D. I have not seen him, M^r G— being attending me for my breast but Doi Dame says he is a most uncommon nice man always playing the fiddle in his own house. M^r Evans is in bad health, a chronic affection of the kidneys. I see no change in him but Harg^{ve} says

¹John Rowand of Edmonton. See Rich, *Robertson's letters*, pp. 240-1. His son, Chief Trader John Rowand, was in charge of Fort Pitt.

he seems quite broken down— The Norway House people are aspersing his character & say since that accident he has become deranged & that his conduct is immoral &c. I am sure it is not true & so is Hargrave.

Miss Evans was married to D^r Donalds cousin. She had on a white satin dress & white satin bonnet a Brussels lace veil &c. MacLean was just come from MacKenzies river & seemed [sentence left unfinished]. Miss Ross writes me quite aghast at all the grandeur. His own appearance as might be expected formed a great contrast to the lady's—People, that is the Norway H^e people say that Evans has gone daft— We saw no symptoms of it. What is worse they asperse his character & say that his conduct is immoral. I am sure it is not true. The man's mind may have got a shake by that fearful accident, but he appears perfectly collected— I may just as well say that it is asserted that the whole village of Rossville has been converted into a seraglio by him— He has been dangerously ill & consulted D^r Smellie who says he has got chronic affection of the kidneys— Miss Christie was married in July to M^r Black¹ a clerk at Red River. They are to live with her father at Fort Garry— And M^r Black is to leave the service at the end of 2 years with M^r Christie & his 2 sons, one of whom is here the other at the lower Fort Red River. Who is then to be governor of the Settlement cant be guessed but it is every year becoming worse to manage. Two of the Settlers² have been opposing the Comp^y & trafficking furs in the Plains & trade them with the Yankees. The Council arranged that these two merchants should get out no goods by the ship & so none of them will have very well stocked shops this year. One of them is an uncle of Miss Sinclair. I wonder what our destination will be.

¹John Black, a "lawyer's clerk," entered the service at Red River in 1839. He later became recorder and judge in the Red River Settlement. He married a daughter of Governor Alexander Christie. See Cowie, *Company of Adventurers*, p. 164.

²Andrew McDermot and James Sinclair, leaders in the English-speaking free trade element in Red River. Andrew McDermot (1791-1881) was the forty-sixth in line of descent from Eochaid Moignedoin, King of Ireland, who died at Tara in 365 A.D. He was a nephew of Daniel O'Connell, a brother-in-law of the O'Connell Don, and one of his nephews was The McDermot, at one time Solicitor-General of Ireland. Andrew McDermot played an important part in the development of the Red River Settlement from 1824 until his death. See Ross, *Red River Settlement*, pp. 399-403; Healy, *Women of Red River*, pp. 129-34. James Sinclair was a brother of William Sinclair.

The Gov^r replied to Hargraves application for release from York by saying he would see him at Red River.

I must now tell you that my gown fits me wonderfully. I was frightened to try it on & was astonished at finding myself slide into such tight sleeves. It is very comfortable & I like the high body— Willie tells me he forgot to leave money for the making it, but as he has to send money for things Papa or someone has got for him, he says he will add it to his own. I reminded him of it today. The cap is elegant & I am much obliged to you both for it & the others as well as the net & lace. Babys mind seemed quite upset by the doll, she flew at her bonnet & began to suck at it so I put her away out of sight till she gets sense.

Miss Allen has wakened up at last & remarked that one had need be a politician to understand Punch. She offered to hear Doi Dame his lesson & questions. He read the verse Suffer little children &c. When she asked him who said that Doi answered glibly I think it was their mothers. Dear what a silly child— He came in 2 days ago in great distress & said the cow is barking for her puppy meaning she was crying for her calf but he knows more of dogs than cattle. Miss Allen looked frightened at his ignorance & said bluntly What a foolish child. He laughed at her opinion of his understanding & took the first opportunity to tell me she was not a beautiful old lady & he wished she would stay in her own Fort & not torture him & eat all our fresh butter— To speak the truth he is more master here than he ought to be.

I tried to write Papa when my breast was very sore but every one seem[ed] to have caballed against that unfortunate letter. Nancy brought me blue [word torn] instead of ink & Johnny got me invisible red from the counting house. I find I cannot write Polly or Flora. Miss Allen comes into my parlor to breakfast at half past 7 & stays there till 8 at night. The Baby is getting 3 teeth & is restless night & day, so that what with scolding Nancy, fomenting & poulticing my breast & listening to Miss Allen's unceasing grumbling at Mr. Macallum for 14 hours a day I am nearly useless. I don't wonder that Miss Ross quarrelled with her on the way out. All the time I have been writing my letters her tongue has been going & I don't think I have told you a single thing I wished to say, so I will be obliged to you to explain why I have not written.

I must not forget to say that Dugald wrote me from Norway H'e & bid me tell you that he really could not send you a longer letter. He says if there is any thing in the world he can do for you, let it be what it may, I am to assure you on my own knowledge that it will give him the greatest pleasure if you will mention it to him. He produced 2 letters from Elizabeth & Frances Mactavish one night when he was going out & told me to write answers for him to copy. I did so & he marched off with the said documents in his pocket ready for copying the first leisure he had. He [word torn] rashly, as he owned, to fill up a corner in his letter to Uncle last Summer, expressed a wish to have a letter from his cousins & to his dismay, the next opportunity, he had that pleasure. Willie came in last night & handed me a letter from Miss Smith w'ch had fallen by & been forgotten. I had been chuckling at not having to write her & was quite dismayed when I found that I was wrong in my calculation. Mrs. Loudoun did not write me, but I have sent her a letter after its sort & have written every other one who wrote me.

I have got my spry shawl from China at last. Only imagine a beetroot colour & white raised silk flowers, it is the same on both sides. Harg've will be harried with me as Miss Allen had got out a purple satinette for a gown thinking she was to stay & have £100 a year at R^d. River. I refused to buy an old bonnet!!! & various other things & when the satinette was offered I was in a high fever & could resist no longer, so I bought 16 yds. When she got this off her hands she offered Mary a Cobourg cloth, & Mary snapped at it for 12/- She also bought ribbons & finery to the extent of 6/ more & Miss Sinclair relieved her of a muslin dress & carpet shoes &c to 13/-. Doi Dame presided at the sale & came to report that Miss Allen had the most elegant box of trash out of the ship that ever he saw.

Hargrave has written a long letter to Papa. He unites with me in kindest love to him, Polly, Flora and Alexander. Doi sends particular love to Uncle Alex. He never saw such a hard black egg as his last compliment, (the cacou) was. He first called it an apple, then an orange & when the thing was opened decided that it was an egg, perhaps a Buffaloe's.

Believe me ever my dear Mama,
Yr. mo. affecte. daughter,

L. HARGRAVE.

53. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

York Factory, 30th Nov' '45

My dear Mama,

The Winter packet is once more ready & I am thankful to say leaves us all well. Letitia was weaned a month ago & behaved very well on the occasion. She begins to walk & speak as well as fight with Doey, who has a hard time of it as he is not allowed to thump her in return. Willie went off to his tent when the ship packet was closed, but unfortunately cut his foot badly with an axe in chopping wood, & had to come home when he was confined for a fortnight, & has not looked well since. His spirits are good & he eats as usual, so that I hope as his foot gets strong & he takes exercise he will get quite right. He has begun fox trapping & has caught six. Dr. Rae is still here & is doctoring him, as he despises our own man who appears no great things. I console myself that he must know his own profession. I don't care about his being a Pork eater which is one great objection to him in the guard room. Dr. Rae came out with Dugald to Moose & is now 32 years old. He had got his Diploma unusually early & has not been home since nor (he says) opened a medical book for 7 years. He is very good looking & can walk 100 miles easily in 2 days. He has got a small observatory where he works away. Doey went in one day & asked if it was Uncle that would not let him into his house that made him stay in such a cold place. The Dr. said yes, so Joseph advised him to go immediately & tell Papa that Uncle was very bad to him for he would soon freeze if he staid there.

There have been disturbances at Red River.¹ Some Sioux & Saulteaux met at Fort Garry, when one of the latter took his gun & shot down a Sioux & killed by mistake one of his own people. The Murderer was seized tried & hanged but the Indians threaten to shoot Mr. Thom the recorder & the hang man, if they can find out who officiated in that capacity, but he wore a mask. Mr. Christie was very anxious when he last wrote. Mon. Bellcour,

¹See Ross, *Red River Settlement*, pp. 330-2. Ross, however, appears to be a month out in his dates. The original records of the court in the provincial library, Winnipeg, Manitoba, state that the trial took place on August 4, 1845; and the evidence indicates that the shooting took place on August 4. The Indian (Capennesewet) was sentenced to be hung on August 6.

a catholic priest labored so successfully with the condemned that he got him to say his punishment was just, but that w^d not pacify them. The wretch got quite powerless & had to be assisted upon the scaffold. They would rather have sentenced him to be shot but as John MacGill would say, that would not be law, & Mr. Thom will sanction no departure from the strict letter of it—

Miss Sinclair is getting on quietly, altho' Mary maintains she is of a heathenish nature & very like an Irishwoman. I was rather shocked to find that she had made Mary her confidante in a very suspicious case of flirtation between my black friend the Rev'd Peter Jacobs & herself at Lac La Pluie. Peter is already married & has 5 children, but it seems he told her that he would marry her in 2 years if she would wait. She seemed greatly flattered, & Mary says never ceases telling stories of the wife's enmity to her. I have regretted every day that I asked Hargrave to let her stay, he does not like her himself, and I often feel rather uncomfortable. I spoke to Willie about the Jacobs affair & he says that the moral character of Evans Mason & Jacobs are all as base as can be, but the comp'y have got tired of denouncing clergymen, as we always get the worst of it. They tell the greatest fibs with perfect coolness & are always believed. Mr. Evans brags that the Wesleyan body in Canada were a great means of driving Sir Francis Head from the Province in consequence of his libel upon their Missionaries among the Indians, but it is said that when Mason had a son, Mr. E. merely reprimanded him, & when Mr. Mason married Miss Thomas he sent the mother a present of a dashing scarlet gown.

People say there is a coolness between the Gov^r & Mr. Ross. Donald flatters himself that Sir George is merely in low spirits but every other person says just the reverse. I don't know what news Hargrave will bring next July, but expect that we will go home. I can't tell you all my reasons, but you will hear them soon enough. I would much rather stay another year, but we won't have much choice & I must prepare to drag myself Mary & the children about the world. When the Gov^r was coming up he invariably said that Harg've could not leave York for the purpose of attending council, all of a sudden he astonished people by ordering his attendance next June. His letters are as usual very kind so that I feel sure he will send us home next Fall, and that he has some charge

for Hargrave that he will not like. His sudden hurry to give Willie his commission & to get an accountant from home is another thing. The accountant was sent to Moose by mistake but may easily be here. I do not know whether Willie will know in June if he has got a share as I forget whether council or the Lond'n Committee have the last word, but believe he will. If this be as I expect, it will put an end to Hargrave's schemes of getting a Post in Canada & we will have to leave poor Doi & go where we will not hear of him for 10 months at a time. But it is no use speculating.

Hargrave heard from Nicol Finlayson that Gladman & his wife & six children along with Chief Factor Macdonald & his enormous family had passed Fort Frances in 2 canoes, Gladman & Mr. MacDonald fighting furiously, I suppose. Mrs. Glad'n would be worrying Mrs. MacDonald as she is very fastidious as to her society, & poor Mrs. MacDonald was an Indian wife of the Govr's. Mrs. Miles, an aunt¹ of Miss Sinclair, was also one & Miss S. always styles Sir George her Uncle & Lady Simpson her Aunt. This is only in conversation with Mary as I would give her a fright if I heard her speaking of "My cousin Wemyss" &c. Annabella Ross is going home next ship. There is a cataract forming upon her eyes & she is to try to have it removed. I suppose she will go to school. Miss Allan went off in very bad humor the day after I closed my letter to you. I was wakened at 5 in the morn^g & told the wind was fair & the tide full & the passengers were to go down instantly. Just as Miss A was sitting down to breakfast Dr. Gillespie came to say good bye, so I went to the parlor & asked him to come & breakfast too, but he said he could not & sat a little. When I went in again to Miss A I found Hargrave & her fighting he telling her she was sauntering & w'd cause them to lose the tide, & she grumbling at not being allowed sufficient time. They sailed immediately & crossed the bar at 5 o'clock in the afternoon.

My breast was so sore that I do not remember a word I wrote, or whether I thanked Mary for the night caps she worked Hargrave. Letitia is wearing the stockings she sent Doi Dame. The said breast is now well enough as far as pain is concerned, but there is a hard piece that sometimes causes me a little alarm. Dr. Gillespie did all he could to cure me before he went as I did not like to begin

¹See letter 26.

with a new man in such a job, but 6 weeks ago I thought I had better show Dr. Smellie the hardness. He said I had better wean the baby or at least not allow her to go to that side, & let him know if it got worse. He never asked more about it. I think it is diminishing but if it does not get quite well, I will attack Dr. Rae in other 6 weeks. There is not the slightest pain now. Willie was looking for some maps last night & stumbled upon a letter to me from Mrs. Worsley w^{ch} she gave him in Edin^h & w^{ch} he had forgot. Mary's arm has got quite well but she is greatly distressed at its being very much out of shape. I think it is rather improved than otherwise, but she says it is "dreadfully thrown." They have killed an ox & she is dying to go to the black puddings. Baby runs about the room in a go cart. If a dozen people were to kiss her she would insist on kissing Mary after each, & when she sees her after being elsewhere for a little she screams & claps her "pretty pretty good good" this being all she can say distinctly. Her double teeth are coming & I am sure she must feel miserable as her mouth is burning hot, but she never cries. Sometimes she sleeps ill tho' not often & then she is quite good if she gets any thing to play with. Doi Dame has begun writing & makes the worst strokes I ever saw. He learns psalms better & astonishes Mary with his geography. He reads as well as can be expected tho' rather slowly. The weather has been very mild so far & he has spent the last two months tumbling with his weariful dog Rose & her puppies, Barker & Blucher, among the snow.

Dr. Smellie has just recovered from a bad attack of Quinsay. He told Harg^{ve} very composedly at one time that his life was in danger from hunger as he could swallow nothing. He attributed his cold to wet feet & his life has been a burden to him ever since he made the confession. Dr. Rae says "he never comes out to dispute the platform with me without changing his shoes when he goes home." Mr. Christie contrived to get him out to the shore of Nelson River last Wed'y to look at Willie's traps as he could not get away himself, but the Dr. got so knocked up that he had to take him into the house, w^{ch} Dr. Gillespie had last year & Willie has now, & leave him there to refresh himself, while he went to look [at] the traps. They will kill the poor soul soon. His mother has 18 children alive. His father and three brothers are

free Church Ministers. Dr. Traill¹ the Professor is his Uncle.

I have my usual speech of no news, to make. Hargrave will leave us on the 2nd March at the latest. I shall write again by him & if we are to go home he will tell you. If not I suppose he will be so busy during the short time he is in R.R. that he will not write. I hope this will reach you soon enough to save you the trouble of sending things by the ship. Jam would be acceptable to Willie, but every thing else w^d be lost. He thinks he will be going across the mountains to take the place Mr. Gladman refused so that we all feel unsettled. We have not heard from Dugald since he left Norway House. I shall weary for April to hear from you again and hope Papa is keeping well. Willie says Flora is quite strong again, so that I am not so often afraid for her as I was for a long time. Doi Dame sends his love to Uncle Alex. He has just got a lecture for folding up his copy as a letter, and is grumbling hard at not being allowed to send him his strokes. I hope a little Winter travelling will bring down Hargrave a good deal, as I often feel uneasy, & am as much puzzled as to where he will stop, as he is about the population question. The last time he was weighed he was upward of but 2 (I think) 214 lbs. & he is more now. Dr. Rae says Uncle John is much reduced & a great deal more active than when he was with him at Moose. Willie desires me to give you all his love & to say he has not a word to say or he would write. I offered him this half sheet, as the postage to the Sault St Marie is 5/ but he says he could not fill it as he said all he had to say by the ship. Doi & Rose have been turned out of the Nursery for making a noise & have nearly stupified me here for an hour past. I daresay I have written the same thing over & over again. Hargrave joins me in kindest love to Papa Mary Flora yourself & the boys. I remain my dear Mama

Ever your very affectionate daughter,

L HARGRAVE

54. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

York Factory 25th Feby. 1846

My dear Mama,

Hargrave intends leaving tomorrow and as there will be no

¹Thomas Stewart Traill (1781-1862), professor of medical jurisprudence, Edinburgh University, 1832-62.

other opportunity of sending a letter I must write a good deal earlier than usual. We are all well, Letitia walks steadily & has left off creeping. She is teething as usual but has hitherto got them without apparent suffering & I hope will continue to do so. She has 3 double teeth at present. Doi Dame grows fast & reads well, but is a very bad writer, altho' the clerks are constantly assuring him that he will be an excellent grinder. Willie's foot got well soon after I last wrote. He is quite strong just now & in good spirits.

One even^g in Jan^y we were astonished by the arrival of Mr. Sinclair from Churchill. He had taken it into his head to be the bearer of his own packet in hopes of finding a letter from Mr. Rowand about his "intentions" regarding Miss Sinclair. But he was disappointed, but not at all daunted, merely observing that perhaps the son might not be of the same mind with the father. After mature deliberation the young lady made up her mind to take Nicol Finlayson if he asks her, & begged Marys!! help in writing a letter to him. They asked a dictionary from me & Mary betrayed faith & told me the whole plot. All I could find out was that it was a very pious serious letter, & between Marys aid & the dictionary would cheat the gentleman into the notion that "she was an extraordinary speller if I did not get Mr. Mactavish to tell him she is a great *bleab*." Nicol's wife left 3 children. He is to be a Chief factor this year. Hargrave thinks he will be very likely to pop, & he will not caution him.

Dr. Rae is going on with his observations & Dr. Smellie with his poetry. This last great work is called Philo Mania. He gives them to Willie to read, but he has never had courage to ask leave to bring them here. I have not had occasion to see him professionally except once or twice to look at Baby, so that we are not much acquainted. I had a letter from Miss Ross last month, she is in Red River, she says for the benefit of her health, but the world alleges she has gone to be married to Mr. Christie's eldest son who was engaged to a niece of Miss Allen's in London. Miss Ross tells me that Mrs. Finlayson had to send her servant Mrs. Potter home from LaChine for some misconduct, but Mrs. F. did not tell me of it when she wrote by the last packet, so that I suppose it is a Red River story.

I have not a single thing to tell you this Winter, & am more over

low just now. Hargrave going away for such a long time, scarcely even a hope of hearing from him, till the end of June & a feeling I have that Red River is an unlucky hole joined to the uncertainty as to whether we are to go or stay next Fall make me feel very uncomfortable. Hargrave is to write Papa & tell him what they may decide upon, so I need not speculate any further.

Mary is quite well, & has made Letitia a mass of conceit. On being shown to any one she first holds out her hands to show how fat, then her feet are exhibited, & lastly her hair. She thinks I admire Doi Dame most & labors hard in Baby's behalf. She can say a great many words, but only one at a time. The winter has been much milder than usual but too cold for her to go out often. She had her cheeks frozen in October as up to that time it was impossible to convince Mary that freezing was not a mere figure of speech & she ventured along the river a long way. Baby came home with her chops a most alarming size and color, but happily it was only a touch, tho such as it was she was 3 weeks before they softened completely. We have taken better care since that. We were all plagued with a curious complaint. I mean Hargrave, myself & both the children. It was a skin disease, red spots, which were very painful. Hargrave suffered most & Willie & several of the men had something similar but I do not know that it was exactly the same. We are all free from it at last. The Dr. said it was caused by the dry air of our heated rooms. Hargrave will write Papa about Dugald if he sees him at Red River. I am anxious about the elections too, as he will be very much annoyed if he does not get his commission. I will write & press him not to be rash. He is sure of it next year, & he has only to remain 4 years after he gets it, to be entitled to his half share for 7 years after he leaves the service. I know he is determined to make his arrangements for quitting it before he leaves Vancouver in case he is disappointed. Uncle advised him not but he thinks he could do as well for himself across there. A number of people have gone & many more speaking of following. We have not heard any thing from the Gladmans yet.

Mr. Cockran the clergyman & Mr. Bird who married one of the R.R. School Governesses¹ are to leave the colony next Summer for Canada, they consider the Settlement not likely to be long

¹Mary Lowman, a widow, was married to James Bird in 1835.

safe. Mrs. Bird is the leader of fashion at Red River, gives dinner parties, balls, & dances herself. There was something discreditable about her former marriage in England, the man being still alive. Her two children came out to her when she married Bird. The other governess Mrs. Pruden,¹ has serious thoughts of returning to England, her husband being so vulgar, she can't live at peace with him. They say he is the best man in the Settlement & you may judge what she is when Cap'n Herd told Hargrave in my hearing that Miss Armstrong was in the habit of sleeping with Cap'n Graves on the voyage out. Herd was then 1st mate & used to have frequently to call up the Cap'n during the night. These are the grandees of Red River, their husbands being retired Factors & having fine houses & phaetons. Miss Allen was to have married the last of the set, a Mr. Sutherland, at least so they said, but he died suddenly in consequence of an over dose of calomel his relations alleged, but as they buried him without sending for Dr. Bunn, Miss Allen declared her conviction that he had only had a fit & had been buried alive, his half breed family being afraid of spirits &c.

There is a report here among the Indians that Mr. Evans is coming down in the cariole that takes Hargrave up to Norway House. I hope they won't allow him, as he would be sure to fight with some of the gentlemen here if Harg've were absent. Mr. Ross writes that they have degenerated into mere bowing acquaintances & that Mrs. E. never goes to the Fort.

The April packet will soon be here & I hope to have a letter from you & to hear that Papa & all are well. Will you give my love to Mrs. Loudoun & Mrs. Worsley when you have an opportunity. Hargrave, Willie & Doey join me in kindest love to yourself Papa Mary Flora & the boys & believe me my dear Mama

Ever your affec^{te}

LETITIA HARGRAVE

55. TO JAMES HARGRAVE

York Factory, 16th March, 1846

My dearest Hargrave,

One man's loss being an others' profit, I rejoice at an oppor-

¹Miss Armstrong was brought out from England in 1835 as teacher for the girls at the Red River Academy. She shortly married John Peter Pruden. See Glazebrook, *Hargrave correspondence*, p. 206.

tunity of writing while Willie swears at Mr. Ross for demanding some sledges of goods which it appears are to start tomorrow. We were glad to get news of your safety so far as the neighborhood of Oxford. I trust soon to hear that you are fairly settled at Norway House. We are all well here. Baby rather fretful with her tooth, but not at all ill. Doi Dame comes the master over us occasionally, but not *very* bad. He has been watching me all day in order to write along with me & is now at work upon "d"'s the letter on which he most values himself as to execution. I am plagued with his criticisms. I have just alarmed him by saying that it will take four dogs to haul the ink he is laying on them. Poor Baby sighed hard & looked very deserted like when she explored the Mess room cuddy and did not find you. Mary's nose bled with the pulling she gave it to make her go there in search of you. She continued this for four nights, but is now quite valiant & when any one asks for Papa she says bow, wow, wow. Her hand was *skinned* over soon after you left, & is now as well as ever. I need not say any thing about poor Dr. Rae's sad news.¹ It is a melancholy beginning to his labors. Miss Sinclair & I get on harmoniously. I wish you knew what I have to undergo in the night, she being of a very communicative turn in her sleep. I am wakened out of my sleep by lively, loud & distinct details of all that her imagination suggests, & last night only was favoured by the intelligence that Mr. Rowand had six horses, English horses, of which she spoke exactly as she does of English needles—the night before I lost the whole of my rest, having been startled by her description of a rape upon herself. She wound up very philosophically with the remark that that was a common thing, her sister & Miss MacKenzie having experienced a similar misfortune. I don't like to tell her that she talks in her sleep especially that she is so peculiar in her choice of subjects.

When the packet came, Willie brought me in a letter I thought he said *from* you, where as it was for you. I opened it but it was only from poor *Pee* so there was no harm done. I felt very dismal for a day or two, after you left but have got up my spirits considerably. I am afraid you will not feel more comfortable while at Norway House by the late "strike" in the Wesleyan's harem.

¹See introduction, p. xcix. For an account of W. G. Rae's death, see Rich, *McLoughlin letters, first series*, pp. 353-5.

Unless the ladies proved their case you will not like to tell Mr. Evans that you don't know him & it will be equally unpleasant to consort with him after the affray over which Mr. Ross chuckles. Willie is writing you & will tell you if there is any thing going on here as I hear of nothing.

Poor old Rose is breaking her own heart & vexing mine by her lamentations for her puppies. I labored hard to get her kept in her barrel, and on Friday night when the nursery people were in bed, put her into the kitchen, or to be correct put her there, & when all was quiet *saw* that she was not out of it. I was wakened early in the morn^g by most piteous howling in the passage & found the witch producing & no mistake. I ran into my room, in horror without looking for puppies as I acknowledge I should have done, & rang loud & long. At last Clouston came. I told him she had pupped & desired him to take her out to the barrel. I then went to the window. Rose was put out, but Clouston did not *then* go with her, as he went into the Mess room & I heard the stove opened & shut. Next morn^g Rose came in again & after a howl in the passage, Mary rushed out and found a puppy just arrived. Presently another followed but these were all we saw, they died soon after in the cask. As Rose w^d not keep out of the house smelling & rummaging about the passage, evidently for more, Clouston denies that he saw any but I am morally certain that he threw them into the stove to save himself the trouble of taking them elsewhere— He has told me two or three fibs but even if he had not I would feel certain that he was doing so in this case. This happened the 2nd night after you left us.

Baby received a pair of spry garnished shoes from Mrs. Ross for which I will trouble you to thank her. She has added the word 'piece' to her vocabulary of useful sentiments. She also saw Mr. Wilson speaking to Doi before the window when she yelled out 'Ah *Pum*' meaning Panum. Doi has just handed me y^r letter *I* am not responsible for its eccentricity internal nor external. He is guarding it like a dragon in case I don't enclose it. I am sure that Lady Mary Montague Madame the devigné nor even Dan O'Connell himself looked with more unmixed complacency on their most elaborate composition than he does on the affair on which he has been spitting for the last 5 minutes.

LETTERS OF LETITIA HARGRAVE 221

With kindest love I ever am dearest Hargrave yours most affectionately

LETITIA HARGRAVE

The clock took a *donsy* fit & would not work. Clouston corked her up on all 4s, but he toiled in vain. Willie spent great part of Sunday with a spirit level, but levelling w^d not do. Poor Dr. Rae in spite of his affliction took her in & arranged her so that she ticks away elegantly now.

56. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

York Factory, 28th August, 1846

My dear Mama,

Hargrave wrote Papa from Red River but did not know at that time what has since occurred. You will therefore be surprised to hear that we are going home by the Prince Rupert in three weeks. The troops¹ all arrived in safety and have all gone for R.R. except two officers & one or two men, who are waiting for the last baggage to come on shore. The Blenheim & Crocodile expect to sail tomorrow. Our own ship will be much later as she is scarcely half unladed yet, our boats have been so busy with the Military. The Gov^r was here for ten days & gave Hargrave permission to go home as I have been complaining since the month of March last. Dr. Smellie says there is nothing far wrong but advises me to try a change. It is an irritation of the womb, at least so he says. Dr. Robertson, the Military surgeon, agrees with him & approved of his treatment, but also recommended further advice. I don't suffer much pain now, but am weak & useless, constant aching in the limbs & oppression & weight elsewhere. Doey Dame & Tash have had measles, which raged all over the country, & been fatal among the Indians, old young & middle aged. Doi sneezed & I was prepared for his taking them but Tash grew red & rough, so I thought I would inspect Doi & found them just disappearing. He had got over them quietly, Nancy having bathed him every

¹A wing of the 6th Royal Regiment of Foot, with a detachment of artillery and Royal Engineers, was stationed at the Red River Settlement from 1846 to 1848. See introduction, p. cii; W. E. Ingersoll, "Redcoats at Fort Garry" (*The Beaver*, December, 1945, pp. 14-17).

morn^g & never noticed the rash upon him. Tash was rather worse but never in bed & always moved about the house for a change of air. She is a good little soul, but I feel anxious about how she will stand the rough voyage. She lives on milk & there will be none, and altho' she has never had any illness, she looks pale & delicate & has not much to lose in the way of fatness.

As usual at this season I am harassed with visitors, Mr. & Mrs. James¹ a Missionary for Rd. River & a very dry preacher Mary says, & Jessy Ross. They plague me very much as I have plenty to do & they have no mercy. We are to come back next year so that I shall only take what is indispensable & leave the rest here. Willie is to be both accountant & Master. I did not think he would have undertaken both. Dugald wrote me he was going off to California to wind up the Comp^{nys} affairs there. Sir George also mentioned that he had sent him orders to proceed to the Sandwich Islands where I suppose he will be for a long time. You will have heard from Harg^{ve} that they are both Chief Traders. Willie says it will only make a difference of £50 a year to them.

A son of Moir, the painters, is the ship Dr. this year. He is like his father, & has a stutter. Wm. & I made up our mind that he was about 24. Imagine our feelings when Capⁿ Mollison said he had met him at Sydney in '21 and he was then a Dr. of a ship. He must then be twenty years older than we had supposed.

We were very much distressed about your arm. If your letter had not come we should not have heard a word about Kilchrist. Doi is delighted at the prospect of seeing the world. He was extremely gracious with the Military gentlemen who were very kind to him. He complains that his trowsers are very ill made at the feet, not at all like Mr. Mildmay's or Capⁿ Blackwood's. I hope Polly has got strong again. I feel quite stupified at the prospect of seeing you all but will write often, till our plans are fixed & till I get out of the Drs. hands. I hope you will send a letter to the Hud^{ns} B. house. Hargrave will be in Londⁿ before me as he will land at the first port & we will remain till the ship reaches the dock. Mr. Ross is here but will leave tomorrow with the military stores. I don't like either his daughter or her chaperone, Mrs. James & they both detest one another. Dugald bid me apologise in case he did not write as he was kicking about Bakers

¹Mr. R. James was a recruit for the Church of England at Red River.

Bay, the Cap'n of the ship he was in being afraid to cross the bar. They had been on board 2 months when I heard. Willie sends his love to Papa & you, he cannot write at present, nor can Hargrave. Give my kindest love to Papa, Polly, Flora & the boys & believe me, My dear Mama

Your very affectionate

LETITIA HARGRAVE

57. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

Ship Prince Rupert

Off Start Point 16th Oct. [1846]

My dear Mama,

We have arrived here safely having sailed from York on the 19th ultimo. Our passage has been unusually good, tho' I cant persuade Mary that such tossing & pitching has ever been endured without destruction to the ship and death to the passengers. The children have stood it well & no one could be a better girl than 'poor Tash' as she calls herself. Neither Doi nor she were sick after the 1st day, & eat like cormorants. Hargrave is well & will soon be going on shore with the packet. Willie bid me say that he had an attack of ear ache & could not compose himself to write till just before Mr. Ermatinger¹ arrived & with one thing & another he could not get his letters finished. I suppose you have got the letter I sent by the Blenheim. She lay in Five Fathom's hole for a fortnight after I sent it off. Mr. Hargrave says he will write Papa on his arrival in London. The children & I will remain on board with Mr. Ermatinger till we get there. I cant guess when that may be as we are becalmed at present & are pitching up & down before an unfortunate light house that has become an eyesore to some of us. All the Fall business was got well over at York & every one well when we left it. I daresay I mentioned that we are to return next June. I have been much better since I came on board, but there is still something wrong. I cant stoop

¹Francis Ermatinger. The Governor had ordered the *Prince Rupert* to be held, if necessary, until the latest sailing date, to await Ermatinger to whom he had promised a furlough and who was travelling with the Warre and Vavasour party from the Columbia. Ermatinger had left his wife, Catherine Sinclair, with her grandmother, Mrs. John McLoughlin. For Ermatinger's biography see Rich, *Robertson's letters*, second series, pp. 212-13.

nor sit for any time without great pain or at best stiffness in my limbs. A son of Mr. Moir's is our surgeon. He is very attentive & kind to me & the children, but is a great curiosity & is between 40 & 50.

Our present intention is to go down to Edin'h by railway, where I shall consult Dr. Simpson by Dr. Robertson's advice, but till we reach London I cannot say positively what we may do. Hargrave wished to go to Osbornes Hotel, but you had better address your letters to Hudⁿ Bay H^e as I would rather take lodgings than exhibit Mary & Mr. Ermatinger to the public gaze in a hotel.¹ Mr. E. breakfasts *on* cherry brandy & Mary came to me yesterday with her eyes starting out of her head to tell "they were saying there was a wizards light to be seen." This was the Lizard light house. She tries to speak high English & exhausts herself in conjecturing how Doi Dame comes to speak Scotch. They have never ceased holistoning the ship since day light this morn^g & the noise is stupifying, they are painting & scrubbing to look fine when we go into dock. The children have worn out all their handkerchiefs by way of scrubbing & polishing the gun room. Mary is afraid that Dois inwards will be dried up he expends so much saliva in the cause. I have nothing more to say now but will write as often as I can from London. I hope your arm has been long well. Mary's never plagues her in the least.

Hoping to find a letter from you in Londⁿ with good accounts of all at home, I remain, with kindest love to Papa Polly² Flora & the boys if they are at Kilchrist, ever my dear Mama

your very affec^{te} daughter

LETITIA HARGRAVE³

58. TO FLORENCE MACTAVISH

Stromness 18th [and 20th] June, 1847

My dear Flora,

I wrote Mama on Monday & have been prevented since that by a violent outburst of nettle rash or something similar w^{ch}

¹See introduction, p. ciii.

²Letitia's sister Mary evidently died between the time the letters Letitia received by the ship were written, and her arrival in Britain. See introduction, p. ciii.

³For an account of the Hargraves' stay in Britain see introduction, pp. ciii-cv.

kept me in bed. My face is still a good deal swelled & inflamed but the rash has gone. The ship came in yesterday morn^g & we immediately sent on board for the Medico as I did not like to trust myself with an Orkney Dr. The ship man is called *Helmkill*ⁿ at least it sounds so. He is young but seems rather 'cute & tho' a prodigiously little man seems like a gentⁿ.

Cap^t Herd is very low. He had laid in stores for 9 passengers beside ourselves but when they were all seated at the Comp^y dinner shine at Gravesend, the 3 ensigns received orders of recall, & the 3 Miss Townshends, & their brother also beat a retreat, from wh^{ch} it is inferred that they had official information that their father² w^d soon come home, & that all the troops will be withdrawn from our territory. There never was work till now, if this report be correct, for the half breeds will get out their horns. Let the Comp^y take it however, for they pretended that they were only afraid of the Yankees in case of war, while in fact it was their own settlers that were inclined to be turbulent. Sir George will be back in a panic. I wonder what he will say.

The ship Westminster arrived last night so that they are all 3 here now. Cap^{ns} Herd, Royal,³ & the Westminster man have just left us with their respective Drs. & are to dine here today. Mrs. Clouston says her room holds 16 but we will be considerably squeezed set. It is wearisome to meet the Cap^{ns}. Every one sits perfectly quiet, the Drs. however whispering solemnly to one another & looking at every person in succession doubtless making their comments, while the Cap^{ns} are blasting away narrating their extraordinary escapes from Fire & water, & reviling their employers. Old Royal is great upon his last danger wh^{ch} was nearly running his vessel "upon them Lowther rocks", in the Pentland firth. He had to get out & man all his boats, & pull the vessel off so that wth great work & in fearful terror they managed to pass the said Rocks by a cables length, otherwise the ship w^d have gone to pieces at the 1st shock. We are not to sail till the 25th & then only if the wind suits. I fear you are not going to write me again. I shall write in a day or [two].

¹Dr. John Sebastian Helmcken. Letitia's references to Dr. Helmcken are brief, but extracts from his account of his experiences on the voyage and at York may be found in the introduction, pp. cvi-cx.

²Their father was an officer of the 6th Foot at Red River.

³Captain Royal of the *Prince Albert*.

20th June—Mrs. Clouston got over her dinner shine. A Cod was the 1st course then came Roast Mutton at the foot, 6 roasted Chickens at one side, a great chicken pie at the head with the toes sticking out, & a ham opposite the chickens. Mrs. Clouston is really a very nice sensible woman & took an oppor^y of informing me that she knew what was right but circumstances made it inconvenient to practise it, for she finds a certain way of doing things necessary when she has but one woman to wait on a party of 16. Her daughter Mrs. Chas. Clouston has been confined of her 7th child in ten years & she did not like to borrow a lass from her. She is an Established parsons wife at Sandwich 5 miles from Stromness & is just 28. There are only 5 children alive. Well the poultry being removed there came a plum pudding & a rhubarb tart, cheesecakes on one side, little tartlets on the other. I forgot to say that they always have potatoes w^{ch} the lass ladles on to your plate that being her idea of handing the potatoes. Miss Clouston¹ the youngest of their 4 children is 16 & is at a boarding school near Liverpool. The eldest as I said is married & one of the boys is at Red River, the other at Moose & both very promising.²

I have dropt my dozes for the present. Dr. Helmskill imputes my late swelled face to the irritation caused by rubbing drops of croton oil into the skin of my stomach w^{ch} Dr. Simpson bid me do from time to time & I really believe he is right as the appearance of the rash on both is similar only that the stomach did not swell & the rash was large & distinct. I shall begin my tar again as soon as I am settled on board. I wish I c^d furnish you with any news but I have none nor any thing that w^d divert you. We expect to go on board on Wed^y & will probably sail on Thurs^y the 24th. As I must repack & have different things to do I shall not write again unless what is not likely to occur, something unusual sh^d take place.

Tash is well & quite happy. Mary Clarke took hold of my poor parasol in the cab going down to Granton & managed to smash the cane in 2. I was terribly vexed at the accident & still more irritated at the way she took it, as she said in a not very civil tone, "If it was worth sixty pounds it could not be helped now." She did not appear at all sorry. I must get a new cane

¹Anne Clouston.

²Robert and James Stewart Clouston.

here. I had laid it on the opposite seat to take Tash on my knee as Mary could do nothing with her great basket on her lap. I hope you are all well & that poor Doi is good & well. I have a misgiving that we shall have a tedious passage somehow. I shall write before we go on board either to Mama or you. Harg^{ve} joins me in best love to you all.

Y^r aff. sister

[not signed]

59. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

Stromness 19th [& 20th] June 1847

My dear Mama,

I received y^r kind letter yesterday & Flora's has just this moment arrived. I hope you have by this time got my letter of the 15th. I w^d have written it on Sunday but the post leaves so early in the morning that I could not write in time, but the Cloustons tremble at the idea of writing on Sunday so I wrote on Monday & dispatched it on Tuesday. I have finished all my letters at last. We are to spend Monday at Sandwich Manse, (Mr. Clouston's daughter's place). On Tues^y we must prepare as we are to go on board on Wed^y tho' it will depend on the wind whether we sail. My face is as well as ever now & altogether I feel very comfortable & the medicines are steadily taking effect. They are terribly powerful & require g^t caution being silver pills, tar & arsenical solution of w^{ch} only 3 drops are to be taken once a day & that not till we get home. Croton oil is to be rubbed in 6 drops 2ce. a day till irritation is produced & this is to be done at intervals. The instructions are perfectly plain & I am to leave off the arsenic for a few days on the slightest appearance of headache, or redness of eyes or pain or sickness of stomach.

Dr. Smellie was engaged to a Miss Grant in Stromness but 4 weeks ago she was married to a writer here. Mrs. Clouston took me to call for her today. The poor Dr. will get a shock as he told every one of his engagement & sustained a good deal of ridicule on the subject. I am very glad to hear that poor Doey gets on so well & trust that he will continue to do so. I spoke to Mrs. Young & mentioned every point on w^{ch} I was anxious. I have got my

unfortunate parasol repaired but I feel no satisfaction in it. Mary came to day & demanded more money. I gave her 10/ the last we owed her in Edin^h & she made the demand so coolly that I said very sharply that I did not owe her a penny. She said very snappishly I know that quite well but you know I cant do without money & I must have some. You'll need to give me leather for shoes when we go to York & money here's the same thing. I was rather annoyed as Harg^{ve} will neither give before the time nor keep it after it is due, so that he w^d not have been pleased, but as she asked only a few shillings & I could give it myself, & was moreover tied to Miss Mary, & dont wish to provoke her at present I gave it to her altho' I c^d have sound use for it.

Tash is perfectly well. The chicken pox was here very lately & probably still is. A boy of Dr. Hamilton's was dangerously ill with it & I am a little frightened that she may get it too. We have been busy boiling milk for her to use on the passage.

20th June— It is very cold & raw to day so I have not gone to church. I wrote the 1st part of my letter last night. Since that Mr. Clouston has received a letter from Stornoway to intimate that Rob^t Ross a son of Donalds is so ill that he can't go by the ship. It is probably consumption as he has been long delicate. His poor mother will find it a bitter trial for she will be long in suspense, & from what his Uncle says there is little hope of his recovery. He is 21, & she has only other 2 sons¹ who are children. She has 6 daughters.² Dr. Simpson's friend the other Ross arrived here yesterday & came to report himself to Mr. Clouston who told me in confidence that the young gentleman had evidently dined & otherwise "refreshed the devil." I think he must have been pretty tipsy or Mr. C who keeps open house w^d certainly have brought him upstairs. Harg^{ve} is wretched. They have crammed 700 Tons into the Westminster & last night we had orders from the House to measure it all (I mean the whole cargo) at York, so there will be a great additional labor & with the additional ship there w^{ll} be enough even if the Londⁿ people had done their own duty. I fear I shall not hear again from Kilcst but I must be thankful that there have [been] so many letters.

¹Donald and Roderick, who grew up to follow their father into the service. The first son, John, had died at the age of seven.

²Jane, Jessy, Annabella, Christina, Frances, Clementina.

There were letters from Red River dated 20th April so that they have come very fast, but we had no news from York. The Gov^r left Lachine within 3 days after his arrival there, & will now be at Red River. They have also heard from the Sandwich Islands but Dug^ld's name is not mentioned so he cant be there. I wonder if he is at R. River. We heard that Sir J^o Richardson was going out with us but it was nonsense. He is to go by Canada next Winter. We will not be crowded with passengers as Mr. Ross is the only one except ourselves, so that we shall have abundance of room. The Capⁿ has not recovered from the disappointment. It seems that our Dr., M^r Helmside, is a German educated in Eng^d. Both he & the Alberts' surgeon are rather queer looking & evidently very young. The other's name is King. They are very agreeable in their own way. One of the apprentices on board has to be left here. He is in great danger from an abscess that is forming internally. One of the sappers & miners has got delirium tremens & the Capⁿ declares he will die. "I don't like to hear a man who has been raving mad for a week, asking one to read the bible to him at 10 o'clock at night" says the Capⁿ, looking quite knowing. The Dr. however says it is not at all a bad symptom.

Will you give my love to Papa, Flora & Doey. Harg^{ve} joins me in so doing. I have written with a most horrible pen & very bad ink. Believe me, My dear Mama,

Y^r mo. affec^{te}

L H

60. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

York Factory 22nd August 1848

My dear Mama

I hope y^u have received my letter of April explaining the accident of the Decem^r one not having been returned from the Sault— The General Palmer ship arrived on the 12th with Major Caldwell¹ & family & 150 pensioners meaning men, women, &

¹Major W. B. Caldwell, who commanded the pensioners, was appointed governor of Assiniboia in June, 1848, which position he held until 1855. Ross, in his *Red River Settlement*, p. 366, says: "The good old Major was so destitute of business habits and the art to govern, that after a few sittings the Council and Magistrates refused to act with him." Ross Papers: Colville to Ross, December 12, 1850: "All goes quietly enough though I am bothered now and then by the follies of Major Caldwell, who is very pompous and vain."

children. As she is to sail with the first wind¹ with troops who are here from Red River on their way home I am glad to seize such an early oppor^y of assuring y^u that we are all well, & that I had a very easy time of it when Baby was born. I had been in what I considered a bad way for two months before, & felt the worse for every attempt to walk or stand much. Indeed during the month of May I was really ill, and for 3 days was in momentary expectation of premature confinement. Even the D^r^s only consolation was, that from the symptoms the proper time might have arrived. For a week before the 10th July I was better & going out a little, & at 12 oclock I was wakened & had to rouse the household. Baby was born at 6 in the morn^g & I have never felt pain of any kind since that moment. We named her Mary Jane after my sister and Hargraves mother. She is the smallest Baby ever seen, but she is amazingly active with lungs & hands & feet besides having an extraordinary power of suction. She promises to be fair but I am not certain as her eyes are changing from a very dark to a light blue. Tash takes her very coolly. I cannot refrain from easing my mind by telling y^u the cause of my illness, as I did not mention it to any one tho' the D^r told me I was hysterical & excited. Mary on the arrival of the Spring packet [piece of letter cut out.]

Immediately after the April packet left York an express arrived ordering W^m to attend Council at Norway H^c. When Sir George saw him he informed W^m that he was to start for the Sault S^t Marie as M^r Ballenden was coming to replace M^r Christie at R^d R^r & that M^r Clouston was to be accountant here. After a little remonstrance however W^m was desired to come & instruct M^r C— in a few of the more difficult points, so on the 27th June, W^m M^r & M^{rs} Clouston (late Jessie Ross)² arrived in a canoe. Willie left us for the Sault on Thursday last & the very next day the Rupert arrived. His clothes letters &c. must therefore be sent back to Eng^l^a before he can get them. I don't much like M^{rs} Clouston. She is fawning & cunning & having got much censured for an alleged flirtation with Capⁿ Herd when she came out with him two years ago, in order that people may think I patronize her,

¹The *General Palmer* sailed on August 30, 1848. While she was at York that post had the largest population in its history.

²See introduction, p. cxix, *passim*.

she submits to great coldness and formality on my part & altho' I have never once said that I w^d be glad to see her she comes over every morn^g at 10 & worries me till one. Her sister Jane is married to M^r Hunter the minister. His poor wife died on the 20th Nov^r last & in Feb^y M^r Ross informed us of the intended marriage of both his daughters, but was under promise not to reveal the name. Jane wrote me in March apologizing for not sooner telling me that she was to be married in June to M^r Hunter. Every one was appalled & his brethren in this country were much annoyed. M^{rs} Ross remarked when she was speaking of it that "people would wonder at the haste, but we were not going to let such a good catch slip". M^{rs} Hunter left one child 8 months younger than Tash. I am sure Jane will be kind to him but I daresay her husband will bother her. There must be something far far wrong about him [piece of letter cut out]

M^r Young writes well of poor Doey, & a friend of M^{rs} Websters daughter of a Colⁿ Playfair has written both by the spring packet and the ship, a letter of his own inditing consisting of a string of questions & a plain unvarnished account of the said Colⁿ Playfairs place of abode. He describes Balgove as if it was a paradise always returning to it, but I do not know to whom it belongs—

M^{rs} Webster is to remain at least another year in Eng^d looking for a situation for her youngest son. She suffers terribly from asthma— The Factory is crowded now. W^m's house is inhabited by M^r & M^{rs} Caldwell with 4 children & 2 maids. The children range from six months old to ten years & have all got whooping cough to my great misfortune. Of course I wrote to say I c^d not go to see her & had a polite note regretting that, but approving of my not running the risk. The half breed children in the Fort however are sure to catch it & then we cant escape & poor baby will be in danger.

The troops are encamped behind our house outside the pickets the officers are packed in the Fort. There has been a marriage among them and only one, M^r Darling¹ of the Commissariat to

¹Lieutenant Darling was attached to the commissariat of the 6th Foot under Captain Mildmay. Darling later rose to the rank of general in the army. William Mactavish to Hargrave, Fort Frances, September 10, 1848: "Miss Margaret Sinclair's marriage to Mr. Darling was the nine days' wonder at Nor. Ho. where that young lady was very much pitied or envied or something else. It was in the pink gown bought at Norway Ho. that she is *said* to have made

my old protégé Miss Sinclair. They were married on his way down by M^r Mason at Norway House. The officers one & all made no secret of their bad opinion of M^r Darling who is hated by all of them from the Major downwards & by Hargrave more than all as he is the only one among them who is not satisfied. The opinion here is that poor Miss Sinclair wont behave in the most exemplary way. Her character already is not without reproach. Her mother with the other members of the family came here a month ago in the schooner from Churchill on their way to Lac la Pluie where M^r Sinclair was appointed to. They arrived on a Thursday & on the following Sunday M^r W^m Christie asked the eldest unmarried daughter to marry him & she & her mother consented. Old M^r Christie will be much vexed & will, I daresay refuse his consent. They had never met nor known any thing favorable of one another till the Sinclairs came from Churchill. They stole a china basin & an oil cloth from me the last time they were here so I have not gone near them on this occasion, & M^r Christie revenges the family by cutting Mary & not speaking to Tash nor looking at Baby. His bride elect scared Willie by walking into his house & paying him a visit, she & her sister also astonished the gentlemen by going into the garde room & asking D^r Smellie to play the fiddle. The bride marched into my house within 5 minutes after Willie had gone off— I sat for a while with her & then rose & told her that she must excuse me “as I had to go & see that his house was arranged for the Major’s family who were to come ashore that even^g”. She then proceeded to the nursery & asked Mary to show her all her clothes— Baby w^d not be quiet so Mary had to make an apology. She wanted to “trade” as they call buying.

I was greatly shocked to hear that poor D^r Gillespie who was here so long had died of fever at Southampton on his return from the Continent with the invalid his mother told us of— His poor mother will be in violent affliction, altho she spoke so curiously of her sons—

I must not neglect to tell y^u that I was perfectly recovered in a month from my confinement & was going about the house in 5 weeks— D^r Smellie in spite of Mary’s assurances that he would the conquest.” Mrs. Darling went to England with her husband and never returned to Rupert’s Land.

kill me did as much for me as D^r Locock c^d and was a great deal more attentive than that practitioner is supposed to be— Tho small, the Baby is thriving well and is never at all indisposed. She goes out every day, sometimes 2ce.

Hargrave is greatly aggravated at what he considers Captⁿ Flemings folly in marrying. I pity poor Miss Smith. I presume she will be required to make the Cap^{tn} take his medicine. By Mary Janes account Eddington had almost to hold his nose every night before they c^d get him to bolt his doze.

I have cut off a slip (from this) containing an account of the nonsense that vexed & irritated me as I have not time to write another letter. It was in short, something Mary thought proper to tell me about Miss MacDougal, far too absurd to be repeated, but at the time it unhinged me & I was made worse by Marys cruelty. She said harshly when I got into an unmanageable hysteria, that I deserved something to cry for when I minded the like of that &c. I have had a horror at her ever since.

D^r Muirhead R N is here & is to call immediately for a letter for M^{rs} Loudoun which I have still to write. Between the Baby & herding Tash from going among the hooping cough patients & people calling, I cannot get time to write. There will be a little more quiet I hope before the Rupert sails— There is still another ship to come with the remaining 150 pensioners & as she brings cargo for the Comp^y & is to take home packs of fur I fear it will be long before there is rest— I had a letter from Eliza^h Mactavish, now M^{rs} Pyke telling me she was married to the Episcopalian minister at Vaudreul & was happy & *well off*, but lamenting for poor Frances who says she is miserable with her Aunts & wishes to get back to Canada— Uncle left nine thousand pounds equally divided between his first (I mean Miss Turners) family & his widow & her children. M^{rs} Mactavish has written me two long letters, since she got home. Her little girls are well, but she does not write as if she was in very good spirits— Her address is Ballinlish (her mothers place) Ballindalloch, Banff. She corresponds with W^m too— I rather fear they will soon have to search for another accountant as poor M^r Clouston has had a severe cough for a year past & looks very ill. The idea here is that he is consumptive & I have seen many in a decline who did not look so like it. Hargrave has got Papa's Mittens ready & will write him by the Rupert—

Dugald is trying hard for leave to get home but the Gov^r does not say whether he will let him or not. Old M^r Simpson¹ was very ill when M^{rs} Finlayson wrote. Lady Simpson & family M^r Finlayson & she were to go home whenever Sir George reached Lachine. Willie will write you but his letters cannot get to England before our ship arrives there. M^r David Hume Ross has got no letter from his mother nor any assistance from any body. He is to go home poor wretch. I fear you will not be able to read this crossing but Flora will manage it. I shall enclose a note for her if D^r Robertson who is to take this, does not call before I am ready.

Tash sends her love & is now busy writing to you having got some ink in a saucer. She has got a pure "Native" as a servant age 14. Mary reviles her, but I patronize her. She never opens her mouth & does not steal. Compared with Marys eternal clatter & bustle Betsy's silence & slowness are refreshing.

Will you give my love to Papa Flora & Alex^r & believe me
Ever y^r aff daughter

L H

61. TO FLORENCE MACTAVISH

York Factory 8th Sept^r 1848

My dear Flora

It is scarcely worth while writing to y^u at present as I really don't know what I shall have to say— Between M^{rs} Clouston who cant sit in her own house because it is dull, & Tash who cant get out because the weather is bad, I have had a severe time of it these last 3 days—as I daresay my letters will testify. Baby too contributed by taking a whim for sleeping on my knee & whenever I put her down or handed her to Mary she squalled till Harg^{ve} c^d not stand it. In despair I set off to my bed with her, with some newspapers at 6 o clock yesterday even^g. We were very quiet & comfortable when on looking up I perceived at each of the 2 windows, 3 hats outside with a brass plate, regular Alberts, with 6th Foot upon them. I thought nothing but rum c^d excuse such impertinence, & was equally astonished & pleased with the extraordinary discipline that c^d have made 6 drunken troopers so perfectly silent & motionless. I sh^d say that the Mosquito blind

¹Geddes McKenzie Simpson died early in 1849.

is fastened so as to fit the lower sash & the upper has none, so that it was only the part of the men that reached above the blind that I c^d see. I lay for several minutes wondering whether I ought to tell any one & get the soldiers expelled the Fort, when one of them raising himself up on a sort of platform, exhibited his black face & I perceived that the whole party were Indians who had come down from Red River as boat men. I took up my papers again, & when my friends had satisfied their curiosity they went off as gravely & quietly as they had come. Why the soldiers had equipped them with hats I have never found out.

M^{rs} Clouston & M^{rs} Darling *mess* together, I dont know how the latter feels toward her chum, but M^{rs} C— c^d both roast & eat her, she detests her so much. I have not seen M^{rs} Darling, Hargrave did not wish me to call for her, & her husband knows too much to allow her to wait upon me in the first instance— She sent for Mary, however & made her sundry presents of *Indian curiosities*. Mary exhibited them all to me with various criticisms depreciatory of the articles, "This is very paltry work ma'am", & "This is a dreadful coarse piece of cloth" "These beads are most extraordinary vulgar like" & so forth, "I doubt yon woman will never learn to act the leddy", altho' the poor sinner had really given her a great deal. M^{rs} Darling had engaged one of the soldiers wives to attend upon & wash for her. I think her husband made a mistake as she is exacting & inconsiderate to the woman, telling her to come at such an hour for instance & keeping her 3 hours waiting from her own child & husband. The woman reviles her & laughs at her airs as being good in a half breed. She will enlighten the regiment on the subject of M^{rs} Darlings family, her mother having 2 husbands alive &c. It w^d have been better to have "done" for herself as M^{rs} Clouston does. But it is no affair of mine— M^r Clouston has got his papers ready in good time— I hope they will be found correct when they get home or there will be a disturbance.

Mary Clarke has taken it into her head that she w^d do well in a house of her own, & she says she will get a gentlemans child whose father & mother are dead, & bring it up "for a consideration". She seems to think gentlemens children so situated are abundant & to be had for the asking. She is not quite easy about her money for she thinks that Nathan & his aids w^d like mightily to get possession. It is plain that she considers herself independent.

In y^r travels did y^u see or hear of a woman who w^d be likely to come to this country? If I live I shall be home, at least as far as I can see at present, but w^d like if y^u w^d keep a look out— Mary is not at all pleased with M^r Hutchisons conduct & she now says he is a great idiot & I suspect she is right. M^r Ermatinger was at Norway House with his boats this summer. By the Foss accounts, he was in a state of intoxication day & night, but they dislike him. I had a letter from Miss Allen who has got a situation as housekeeper & one of the family to a M^r Adams Harley House Londⁿ. She seems more pleased wth herself than with the old gentleman, whose daughters are all married. You may believe I was very distressed to hear of Johns misfortunes. Captⁿ Herd had seen Captⁿ MacArthur who does not expect to have to sail again to Tobago. I hope that the help government is giving them may re establish the owners of property there— There are no passengers going home by the Rupert except M^r David Ross & M^r Rundle.¹ Captⁿ Herd has sold his fresh stock to the Capt^{ns} of the Transports & I think has cleared money by the transaction. He paid 30/ in Londⁿ for pigs, & obtained 50/ here, but being young there is no doubt that they had grown a little. The other Capt^{ns} appeared to be very *hard* up for provisions as they beseeched Harg^{ve} to sell them some salt geese for the officers mess. Salt geese are barely edible on shore & I can hardly think they could be swallowed at sea. Both the Capt^{ns} were horrors especially a Capⁿ Webster of the Lady Fitz Herbert who opened the mess room door (when he came on shore) when all the gentlemen were at dinner, & making a polite bow, fixed his eyes on a full length portrait of Lord Nelson,² & said to the company in general, "I hopes you're wall." I rather regretted that I did not see one of them as I fear I shall not get more than this letter smuggled. I will give it to Herd but I w^d have been glad if there had been some passenger of easy principles who w^d have taken a few more. I do not know whether I ought to write M^{rs} Loudoun again, having nothing particular to say it w^d only put her to the expense of postage. I had a very long letter from

¹The Reverend R. T. Rundle, Wesleyan missionary at Edmonton.

²This fine oil portrait of Lord Nelson, and its companion picture, "The battle of Trafalgar," now hanging in Hudson's Bay House, Winnipeg, Manitoba, hung on opposite walls of the summer mess at York for many years, and were a matter of speculation in the Company as to artist and source. Their interesting history has gradually come to light.

Miss Loudoun in w^{ch} she expresses a slight regret at not having made y^r acquaintance last Winter. It is wonderful how well 3 such old ladies keep as she her sister & M^{rs} MacCulloch. Hargrave has been seized with a lively remembrance of M^r MacTaggarts wit & other entertaining qualities & to my surprize informed me he had resolved to send him a buffaloe robe. I daresay Dan will stare a little himself—

M^r Hargraves father died in Sept^r last year.¹ His son was reading to him not thinking him in any danger, & he slipped away. He was very old, & could not see for 2 years previously— There is just a sister unmarried & Hargrave appears to think she is a Tartar but he only judges by her letters as he has scarcely seen her. She censures her friends & relatives, himself among the rest with extraordinary force & freedom.

Tash has been grazing, eating something green as M^{rs} MacBrair w^d say, & has had a doze of castor oil. I dont know as yet whether she has partaken of a vegetable or wild flower, w^{ch} ever y^u please, called by Indians “The fat hen”,² w^{ch} Betsy delights to eat, or whether it has been green berries, but whatever it was she has not been comfortable & is reluctant to confess. She bolted the oil— Mary paid 3/6 for a bottle of oil in Edin^h. She waited for a slight indisposition for 6 months & in despair took a tablespoonful to try if it was good. She declares that it is salad oil in a rancid state & had to get a doze of something else to dislodge it from her system. I was sorry for her she lamented her disappointment so bitterly & declares that she will go to the shop in Edin^h & rage at the man.

With kindest love to Papa Mama & Aleck if still at home
Ever y^r affect^{te} sis

L H

62. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

York Factory 29th November 1848

My dear Mama,

The Winter packet is to be dispatched immediately & trusting that my letter will not again miscarry, I once more proceed to

¹See introduction, p. cxiii.

²A species of nettle.

write to you by this opportunity. We have all been quite well since the ship sailed. Baby is thriving, & altho' still very very small, she has gone on improving steadily, & has got a comfortable double chin. She is very lively & intelligent looking, but rather furious at times. The season has been unusually mild hitherto, so that she gets out for a few minutes occasionally, & comes home with a blue face & nose generally roaring till Mary says she is stupified. Tash is seldom in the house & has become very hardy. I never saw a child with such a perfectly good temper as she has. It is impossible to provoke or irritate her. She has her frailties, but is neither sulky nor hasty. Mr. Hargrave has been very well & has had no return of rheumatic gout since we came out again. Dr. Smellie has been almost crippled, & seems a little "bowed in the intellect" with it. It has taken possession of his heel & gives him great pain. He has left off drinking any tea and confines himself to milk, water & sugar. He still takes wine, & altho' he declares venison to be pernicious, he devours fat pickled pork & advises others to do the same.

The day after the Prince Rupert sailed the Military went on board the transport ship.¹ Mrs. Clouston was worn out with rage & vexation. Mrs. Darling & she had a sitting room between them & eat together. Mr. D. showed the greatest dislike to his wife being with Mrs. C. & kept her constantly in her own room, & at last absented himself from the mess table & took his meals with the ladies. Mrs. C. felt so much, at Mr. Darling's taking the head of the table while his lady took the foot that she got seriously ill & was in bed for a week after they left. She has a good many discomforts now as she has to come across here 3 times a day as Mr. Harg^{ve} could not allow her a separate mess in winter. She has only one room for sitting sleeping &c. & the third part of it is occupied by Mr. Clouston's large desk & enormous ledgers. She can't get out or in to this room without passing thro' the office which opens to it. This w^d have all been very unpleasant to a chief factor's daughter had not Hargrave broken her into a sense of its comforts by putting her into a house with the Sinclairs

¹The *Lady Fitz Herbert*. It had been a busy shipping season at York. The *General Palmer* arrived on August 11 and sailed on August 30. The *Prince Rupert* arrived on August 18 and sailed on September 11. The *Lady Fitz Herbert* arrived on August 25 and sailed on September 12.

& Darlings when she first came, so that a room of her own is by her own account delightful to her.

We have heard nothing from inland, but I hope that by the return of the packet in 4 weeks we shall have letters from W^m.¹ We know nothing more of our future movements than when I wrote in Sept. I still shrink from the idea of going home alone & do not think I shall have courage for the undertaking. If Hargrave could go, I should be more anxious than ever but the prospect of leaving poor Tash is more than I can stand. I shall weary for April to hear how you all are & what Doch is doing. He expected to be able to write a letter himself in Feb^y next.

Mr. Miles,² one of the clerks, a boy of 19, went out to hunt on the 1st Nov^r & lost himself in the woods. "The people" took alarm about his not returning as this is his 1st year here. At 3 in the afternoon Harg^{ve} sent off an Indian & a half breed boy to track him, & guide him home. At 4 as none had returned 7 men were sent out. The Factory bell kept ringing & 2 lights hoisted in the outlook. At 8 different parties returned, one of them having found his track, but lost it on the light failing. It was windy but the thermometer was 15' above zero. The people were all sent off next morn^g the mercury being then only 10 above °, but Mr. Miles made his appearance at 10, stumping upon his heels, with all his toes frozen & parts of his feet. He had recovered a track quite by chance. The Dr. thought he would lose his toes but they are getting better and are now out of danger. It was a miserable night to every one in the Fac^y as nothing could be done before day break.

The gentlemen who went down to visit the ship³ after the packet closed brought a woful account of the penitent "David Hume" Ross. He had got fearfully tipsy in the schooner going down the river, having helped himself to some rum which some incautious person had left in his view. When he went on board the Rupert Captⁿ Herd summoned him to the cabin & lectured him threatening to send him "forward" if such a thing ever again occurred. "The Rev^d Rundle" was horribly sea sick lying in 5

¹William had been posted to Sault Ste. Marie. He left on August 16.

²George Miles, son of Robert Seaborn Miles. He became a chief trader in 1861.

³There was usually a gentlemen's party on board ship the night before she left. The gentlemen from the fort sometimes stayed all night.

fathom hole, & sent Harg^{ve} a message, that he had forgot his bible & prayer book & begging to take care of them.

Mary Clarke has got sentimental & has made her will. It is only verbal as yet. Wee Duncan & wee Flora, Bobes bairns are to have all between them, & wee Mary is to be informed that her Mother told Mary in a very disdainful way that she was named for her Aunt in Green^h the Mate's wife, & of course not for the testatrix. However Mary declares she has no ill will for the Lassie & hopes she will never want. I am to be executrix. She tried another doze of castor oil & [was so] evidently the worse of it, that I reported the case to Hargrave who instantly bought a bottle & presented it to her on condition she would throw out her own. She pronounced the new stuff a perfect cordial, but expressed reluctance to throw away 3/6 worth, & wondered if none of the animals c^d take it. For some time past Rose's puppy Pompey has been looking very haggard & ill. I can't help thinking she has been giving it to him.

Tash's Indian servant is an excellent & willing worker, but the organ of acquisitiveness must be large & philo progenitiveness absolutely wanting as she hates playing with children & seizes upon every article that poor Tash has. Mary is frightened to reprimand her as Mrs. Henderson told her that "Bleks" were dangerous when they were angered. Betsy never seems to take an article from any one but Tash, so that I suppose it is a monomania.

Fox hunting has begun. I don't know who has got Willie's ground. Mr. Hackland is the only one in the garde room who attempts it now. I don't know if I told you that Mr. Ross's son who went home 3 years ago died at his Uncle's in Stornoway. Mr. Reid the chief Mate told me that he had been in gaol for debt, I don't know whether in Lonⁿ or Edin^h & was so dissipated, that his half breed friends in Lonⁿ informed Reid in a cool easy way that "his Uncle" had put him "out of the way" to save further trouble. Of course this is a half breed idea, but he had given his friends great uneasiness.

Tash bids me tell you that she can speak Indian & has got a glass necklace of red beads. Hargrave encloses a note to Doch which we will thank Florence to forward to him. Mrs. Clouston as usual is sitting by me, she has taken to knitting & is as dull as ever. I hope y^u will all be well when this reaches you. I am afraid, & indeed almost sure that Willie will not have heard from

y^u before he writes. Did a little Husky image reach you last year? Hargrave had it put into Mr. Loudouns Buffalo robe box along with a wooden doll.

Harg^{ve} joins me in love to Papa Flora Lockhart & Aleck also to Mrs. Loudoun & all "inquiring friends". Tash also sends her love. She remembers Papa & y^u & has a dim recollection of "Miss Flora". Believe me my dear Mama

Ever y^r mo. affec^{te} daughter,

LETITIA HARGRAVE

63. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

York Factory 29th March 1849

My dear Mama,

The papers for Council are to be sent off on Satur^y so that I have an opportunity of letting you know that we are all well & have been so since I wrote in Nov^r. We have not heard from W^m, but expect the Sault packet in 4 weeks, when we hope to get letters from home. The Winter has passed here in the usual way, & except a man freezing his feet, without accident. Baby by the bye had her cheeks touched repeatedly & even now there are two blue spots on them, but of course the damage was very slight. She was nearly 3 months without crossing the door but is thriving & has got very fat. More so than either Doi or Tash ever was. She has cut 3 teeth within the last 5 days & has more on hand. Hitherto she has felt no inconvenience from teething. She sleeps in the night & plays during the day as if nothing was going on. Tash is well & growing tall. We have hard work learning *ab, ac*, at present; *ba, be & c* got on easily but I dont expect ever to get her to comprehend the short sounds.

Not having heard from Sir George we dont know what our plans may be for next year, nor will we be able to acquaint y^u with them as there will not be another opportunity of writing till the ship returns. Mrs. Clouston has been very ill for six weeks past. She has lost her voice & coughs incessantly. She thinks the Dr. has neglected her. He did not use the stethoscope till the day before yesterday, when he intimated that it w^d be necessary to blister her. She seems in very low spirits & is irritable & dis-

contented. The Dr. told me he saw nothing to make him apprehensive at present in her case.

Major Caldwell & family reached Red Riv^r in safety. I was surprised to learn that they had sent their eldest boy & girl to Macallums School. By Mrs. Finlaysons account a person had only to use her eyes to see what a very unfit place it is for any one to leave a child, & I can testify to the misdemeanors of all the pupils I have had an opportunity of seeing.

Dr. Rae & Sir J^o Richardson have come from the "Sea" & did not see nor hear any thing of Capⁿ Franklin. The Gentlemen in the Country all looked very polite & as if Sir John's expedition was a very feasible exploit, but among themselves they either laughed at the whole turn out or seemed astonished that rational beings sh^d undertake such a useless search. It seems they were right & I dont think they will be accused of not doing every thing in their power to aid it. Sir J^o will return by Canada. Dr. Rae is to remain & take charge of McKenzie's River as Mr. McPherson goes home. The people about the Rocky Mountains write us that gold is got in great abundance & with wonderful ease, inasmuch as a little boy dug a thousand pounds worth with his spoon. The Yankees in the Columbia rushed off whenever they heard of it & left their beautiful wheat fields some ripe & some cut down, on the ground to rot. I dont know how the speculation will end but it is likely they will have reason to wish they had secured their crop. I expect to hear that Dugald is in the midst of them. He had a notion for California when he only admired its hides & Tallow. When Diamonds & gold are its staple his partiality will be increased.

No disaster has happened in the Northern Department this season. There is however an extraordinary scarcity of animals, Fish, flesh & furs. The Indians are starving in every direction & of course the dividends will be small. Even the Buffaloes have left the Saskatchewan & there will be no dried Meat nor pemican for next year. Mr. Rowand had been living on hung fish, in the last stage of decomposition for a month. He had heard of buffaloes 100 miles off & sent men & horses out to bring home what they c^d get, but the Indians attacked the men with arrows & robbed them of their horses & they returned to Edmonton in a miserable plight.

I need not say how we are wearying for the packet to hear

how y^u all are & what Doch is doing. I have hopes that we will not require to move this ensuing Winter & that Hargrave will be able to go with us next year. I am certain I c^d not *lug* Mary & all her boxes, baskets & bundles from London to Edin^h, not to mention Tash & Baby. I am almost sorry to say that Baby's passion for Mary is equal if not greater than Tash's. She throws out her legs & arms & shrieks for joy whenever Mary makes her appearance after a short absence & in the morn^g when she takes her away it is ludicrous to see & hear her. How a separation is to be effected I tremble to think of. Mr. Hargrave has been perfectly well all Winter tho' he begins to feel the effects of the long confinement. He will get to out door work on Monday, that is, the people commence packing in the stores & he gets about constantly. He has increased in size but I have little to say as I have gone on daily enlarging since last Aug^t & am now a burden to myself. My only hope is that I shall come down when I wean the baby.

I suppose you will hear often from Wm. When Mr. Ballinden met him, Mr. B. was suffering terribly having had an attack of paralysis on the way up to Red River. He continued weak & ill till December when he suddenly recovered his Memory & in a great degree his strength & took charge of Fort Garry. I hope he is as well as ever by this time. He has a wife and a number of very young children. We have not heard whether the Finlaysons are in Eng^d but as Sir George was to send his eldest daughter home to school, I daresay he w^d manage to spare Mr. F.

Hargrave joins me in love to Papa yourself Flora Lockhart & Aleck also to Mr. & Mrs. Loudoun. Tash also sends her love to you all. She is in great spirits, young Rose's pups have opened their eyes, & a mouse having been killed in a trap w^{ch} she is hugging.

I have not written to Doi, indeed I shrink from attempting it it is so long now since we heard from him, ten months since the date of his & Mr. Young's letters. He will be able to read my letters himself soon & then we will not let a packet go without availing ourselves. Hoping that in a short time we will hear that y^u are all well & comfortable, I remain My dear Mama ever y^r very affec^{te} daughter

LETITIA HARGRAVE

64. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

York Factory 30th October 1849.

My dear Mama

As the unfortunate hired vessel has not arrived Hargrave has to send off a packet by Canada for Eng^d so that I write a month earlier than usual. "The Graham" left London with our own ship & parted from the "Rupert" after entering the Bay, since that she has not been heard of & no hope exists here that she or her crew are in existence.¹ The gentlemen at home will be greatly annoyed as they sent their own ship out quite light nothing but the Clergy² & private property on board & the stores here are literally empty. We have all been quite well since I wrote— Baby is running about, & speaking in her own way. She has got all her eye-teeth, is very fat as well as tall, & does what she pleases with her Papa, Mary & poor Tash. Mary's caps are torn & her face deeply scratched but she thinks it is an evidence of Baby's cleverness. Old M^{rs} Christie got safely on board & was pleased with the ship & all connected with it. She went off quite coolly, not so the poor old man who was greatly moved. M^r Clouston³ seemed very glad to get away & looked much more cheerful than anyone expected. D^r Smellie⁴ too was in high spirits & declared he was

¹See introduction, p. cxxvi.

²David Anderson, bishop of Rupert's Land, 1849-64, who had been consecrated at Canterbury on May 29, 1849, had arrived by the *Prince Rupert*. He was a widower, and was accompanied by his three small sons and his unmarried sister. In the party were also his chaplain, Mr. Chapman, and his wife, and the Reverend R. Hunt, a Church Missionary Society missionary for the English River District, and his wife. For details of the bishop's stay at York see S. Tucker, *The rainbow in the north* (New York, 1852), pp. 248-60. See also *Report from the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company, 1857*, pp. 231-47.

³Robert Clouston went on furlough for his health.

⁴Simpson to Hargrave, June 20, 1848, *public letter*: "Mr Smellie the surgeon, who like all other medical gentlemen in the country is engaged in the double capacity of surgeon and clerk, is either so incapable or so unwilling to render himself useful in the latter capacity and has been so unfortunate in his medical practise as to destroy all confidence in his professional skill, that it has been considered advisable to request the Company to send out by the ship next year another medical officer, so as to enable us to dispense with Mr. Smellie's services." Same to same, same date, *private letter*: "I have begged the Company to endeavor to send out someone next year in his place who will make himself generally useful. Both Gillespie and Cowie took well to their work: Rae was the most

glad to escape. Poor M^{rs} McLaughlin was most to be pitied, she expected to be confined on board, had no servant, with the little boy to watch & attend to, & her husband¹ not very kind to her. I had a letter from Miss Anderson written from Norway House & sent by the Indians who went up to hunt for the party to keep them in fresh provisions. She writes at great length & seems to have been wonderfully delighted with the inland voyage. The children escaped without accident & were not at all troublesome. M^{rs} Hunt also wrote me a few lines at the same time & M^{rs} Chapman the "Reader's" wife addressed M^{rs} Wills² in such a quaint style that M^{rs} W. has made up her mind that she has been a lady's maid in her youth. We have heard nothing of M^{rs} Pelly³ since she left us nor of the Rosses. M^r R. wrote a few lines to Hargrave on business, but never mentioned the name of wife or child.

Hargrave fretted very much for some weeks about the non-arrival of the vessel, but he has begun to get reconciled to the misfortune and is now better than I have seen him for a year past. He was annoyed with a numbness of the right thigh for many weeks of the Spring & Summer, which has now left him completely, but I cant help thinking he is looking very old & worn. I got such a fright as D^r Smellie said it was a symptom of paralysis, that I may be wrong in my notions of a sudden change in his appearance. It is now said to have been a sort of muscular rheumatism. He is in very good spirits but still wishes to leave York. The Comp^y will be soon "utterly abolished"⁴ so that I dont think it worth while to change. Last June he was drawing £150 a year interest from the funds— If the worst comes to the worst we wont starve, but I dont feel disposed to waste means in travelling to a place w^{ch} we may have to leave in a year, when affairs are in such a

efficient man we had at Moose for a length of time; Rodk. McKenzie is likewise very useful there in the countinghouse, stores and trading; Barclay has long been one of the most serviceable men at Vancouver; and John Kennedy was, without exception, the best second on the N.W. Coast, & now holds a very important charge—Smellie, on the contrary, appears really worse than useless."

¹John McLaughlin, nephew of Andrew McDermot, of Red River. See *Report from the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company, 1857* (London, 1857), p. 262.

²Wife of Dr. Wills, who had come by the ship to replace Dr. Smellie.

³Anne, daughter of Edward Clouston, of Stromness, who had been married at York to A. E. Pelly of Red River, by the bishop on his arrival.

⁴See introduction, p. cxxix.

critical state. This is by far the most respectable place in the Territory. W^m is miserable at the Sault. Harg^{ve} has assured the Gov^r that he could manage York perfectly. Whether he will send him back or not I cant imagine. I am wearying to hear about Lockhart & Aleck & hope you have before now got letters from the latter. We have not heard from W^m since June, but there will be a packet in Dec^r. M^{rs} Wills is getting on well & seems reconciled to her lot & determined to make out her 5 years unless she becomes ill. She brought very nice furniture for a bedroom & has painted her room at her own cost & made it very neat & comfortable, only she has no stove as all the apartments in the guard room are heated by one stove in the hall. Her father is not a farmer being a proprietor in Devonshire 7 miles from Torquay. He inherited large orchards from an uncle & is also a cider merchant. She is very like a lady & happily for herself is very easily pleased & good tempered. The D^r is a great improvement as far as manner goes, on D^r Smellie, & is extremely attentive & kind. Poor D^r S. was so too but he was not liked, from his queer disputatious habits. M^r Wills has got good expectations from an old Aunt, & means to commence practise in Eng^d as soon as he leaves the service. Tash is getting on very slowly with her reading. M^{rs} Wills gives her a lesson every day.

We have had an uncommon mild Fall. In place of being below zero as often happens at this season, the glass has not yet been lower than 28 above. It is very disagreeable as it is constantly snowing & from the thaw we cant cross the threshold without wetting our feet, nor till the swamps are frozen can any country provisions be had, nor sheep nor cow killed as they would not keep, so that we are rather worse off than usual. I dont know whether I told you that Captain Foss¹ at Red River, had quarrelled with Major Caldwell, & been placed off duty. Sir George got them reconciled but it is not very encouraging that the only 2 officers should not be on good terms. Captⁿ Foss is an Irishman with very popular manners, not much above 30 I believe. He married a widow lady with 2 little girls, who has separated from him. When he came here he told his friends Harg^{ve} among others, that

¹C. V. Foss. For an account of the incident see Morton, *Sir George Simpson*, p. 201. Captain Foss came to York to meet the ship of 1849, and to conduct the second party of pensioners to Red River.

he had left M^{rs} Foss at home till he saw how she w^d be situated in Red River. But it appears the lady has no intention of troubling him again and had left him soon after her marriage. M^{rs} Christie told me that he gambled & that at the Settlement he was very successful in a small way. His countryman M^r M^cLaughlin, James Sinclair & M^r Pelly¹ Anne Clouston's husband being his *play mates*. M^r Sinclair who has made such a noise in abusing the Compy. seems to have been his partner. Mrs. Christie mentioned that M^cLaughlin had lost £50 & Pelly £70 last winter. She also told me confidentially that it was the general opinion in the Colony that the Capt^{ns} attentions to M^{rs} Ballantyne [Ballenden]² were of such a character as to entitle M^r B. to a divorce, but he takes her preferences very philosophically. The Gov^r was nervous about putting B. there as he knew the lady's infirmities & could not choose that among Bishops &c. there should be anything questionable within the Company's Fort, but he could get no other person. M^{rs} B. has been married 12 years and had 8 or 9 children. The husband is an Orkneyman & a Chief Factor. M^r Pelly will probably not be so foolish as to play this winter. It was bad enough that he did so last, considering all things & that he has only £100 a year to come & go upon. Anne brought an immense quantity of finery 5 perfectly new bonnets besides that she wore on board, & scarves handkerchiefs & shawls as if she had been going to Calcutta, & napery blankets &c. all from her Father & Mother. They have not much money & I am sure will feel the effects of such disbursement for many a day, besides they will have their son³ I fear for M^{rs} Wills says her husband told her that a part of the right lung was gone, & he had a fearful cough & pain in the chest. Had he been able to remain he w^d have had his commission next summer. There are ten of us at the Mess table this season. M^{rs} Wills has never once absented herself. M^r Clare a Cockney, M^r Lockart,⁴

¹A. E. Pelly (b. 1821), second cousin of Sir John Henry Pelly, Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company, entered the service as a clerk in 1838, and became a chief trader in 1850. He served at Fort Garry previous to being posted to the Columbia Department in 1852. He was at Lachine for a short time before his retirement in 1854.

²Ballenden. Sarah (Sally), daughter of A. R. McLeod, was married to John Ballenden in December, 1836.

³Robert Clouston.

⁴James Lockhart, an apprentice clerk.

Wilson, Hackland, Miles, Anderson¹ & the D^r. Mr. Clare has charge of the Office in the meantime & looks as if he would not hesitate about undertaking the whole management of the Northern Department single handed.

I have got the towels made & they are excellent, as soft as a sponge. I divided it into 24 as you recommended. Hargrave advises me to put half a dozen for [illegible] to Tash & Mary Jane, as he is sure that two will last him a life time. There is not much in my letter, but I may be thankful that there is nothing distressing to communicate. My own health continues good. There is not much to try me here but I feel I could not stand much so that I wish we were at home, I mean settled somewhere before I get older. The feeling of insecurity makes me nervous, for we are constantly expecting an order to move. No reliance can be placed on the Gov^{rs} plans or promises. Mary Jane is becoming a great curiosity. She has quite given up creeping, except when the room is rather dark when she always gets on her knees for fear of accidents. Mary is astonished as she had made up her mind that she had a weakness in her limbs, & w^d not walk till she was 4 years old. "Every bairn naturally runs when it is 12 months old, & if it does not, it may be years before it will go. I said before ever this one was born that perhaps it w^d not live, but I see a weakness in its legs its going to have, and thats a great grief to the one thats taking care of it." This was Mary's daily harangue. The D^r asked her where the baby's knees went when she was kicking &c. but she w^d not be comforted declaring that M^{rs} Lockhart always had an experienced old doctor nearly blind with age, so much so that he nearly cut Miss Charlotte's tongue instead of her gum, & would not take a *spalpeen* like D^r Smellie. She now accounts for Baby's walking by the way she has fed her.

I enclose a note for Doey & will be obliged if you will forward it to him. If he goes to Kilchrist next year, will you tell him to write us & send the letter by the same opportunity as you write yourselves. Hargrave joins me in kindest love to Papa yourself & Flora. Will you also remember us to Mr & M^{rs} Loudoun. I have had some alarming dreams about poor old M^{rs} MacBrair of late. Tash sends her love, she seems to have some faint recollection of home,

¹William Anderson, one of Hargrave's most valued men, whom he had been instrumental in raising to a post mastership. See introduction, p. lxxi.

especially the speckled bantam hen she called Cock Robin, that used to run after her down the avenue. She is very fond of M^{rs} Wills & of the D^r.

I remain my dear Mama

Ever your affectionate daughter

L. HARGRAVE

65. TO FLORENCE MACTAVISH

York Factory 24th Augst 1850

My dear Flora

I rec^d y^r letters of March & June, & was as y^u may believe glad to find that y^u were all well. Among my documents by the ship was one from D^r Smellie informing me that on his arrival in Londⁿ last Fall, he had made advances to Miss Christie, & been graciously received by the young lady as well as the old people. He proposed, was accepted & M^r C— only stipulated that he sh^d get into business before any further step was taken. The D^r thought this reasonable & set out for the North, after being about a fortnight in Londⁿ. He made a tour thro' the North of Scotl^d & found a promising opening at Wick, without loss of time got a large brass plate, W^m Smellie M.D. took a house, & wrote Miss Christie that he w^d marry her on a certain day of March. The Papa then acquainted him that he saw no occasion for such haste, & that he w^d require to have a certainty of a small income before he surrendered his daughter— The D^r replied that he might decide if he chose whether there was occasion for his daughters marriage but he had no right to dictate as to his, & intimated that he had made up his mind & w^d be settled on the day fixed. Accordingly he was married without further correspondence with M^r C— to Miss Miller of Wick, “a young lady I had known 8 years ago, & with whom I had at that time slightly flirted”—

Poor M^{rs} MacLaughlin reached Londⁿ safely, & 4 days after was confined— M^r Clouston¹ came up with the canoes from Canada as far as R^d R^r & has gone to the Columbia. They say he has quite recovered. William arrived here 3 weeks ago & is to relieve Harg^{ve} of his charge next May— He was disappointed

¹Robert Clouston.

at not hearing from y^u by the ship, as he wrote in March that he was coming. Hargrave goes off when the river opens in Spring, & if I am alive I shall go with my encumbrances by the ship this time next year. I dont mean to think much about it having abundance of troubles on my hands at present. I never was better in body than I am, but Mary worries me to death. I w^d give a great deal to be able to send her packing. She is so atrociously cunning that I cannot be sure whether she really means to be insolent or whether she is only getting more & more stupid. Y^u may conceive what a time I shall have when I am shut up with her for 4 weeks— She has made Betsy the exact counterpart of herself & they spend their lives reviling me & envying their neighbors— I suppose it is the prospect of a little more to do this Winter that has stirred her up, for she had been pretty quiet for many months after a row in w^{ch} she solicited what “was due to her & she w^d be glad to go away”— It was no command of temper that enabled me to restrain myself sufficiently not to tell Harg^{ve} but merely that I felt humbled & ashamed that a woman to whom I have positively never said a hasty word but whose faults I have toiled to conceal from him & others, should maltreat me. She made an apology afterwards & expressed great penitence. I asked Harg^{ve} to give her a bill settling her account up to the 1st June, & she has sent it to Nathan for £43. She has fully £100 now— I hope it will reach him safely— I w^d not have written y^u but she was tormenting me while I had the pen in my hand.

Poor M^{rs} Wills has got into difficulties at last, & will be confined in March unless she is mistaken. She looks fearfully ill & croaks incessantly for what she cant get & imagines that if she had bacon it w^d strengthen her, & that wth a proper diet she w^d feel quite well. She did not, as Pensey used to say run well when intellect was dividing & her instructors have either been very unfortunate, or very careless in improving her deficiencies. She is quite ignorant except that she speaks correctly & there is nothing particular in her writing. She knew of no novels when she came, but Valentine Vox Nickleby & Tom Jones!!! Had never heard of Scott, Bulwer, Dickens nor even James— She is pious in a small way, but never read the old testament because it is really a bad book— There are such disgraceful things in it that she used to be ashamed in church to hear the sad stories the minister read. She is a good soul &

very kind & obliging as well as even tempered. She has got a house¹ or at least 2 rooms & a stove to herself, but how she is to get through her troubles without a servant I cant conjecture.

Tell Mama that I am very much obliged to her for the parcel, the apron is beautiful. M^{rs} Wills will make it up in a fashionable style for me. Tash had been dying for an ornament for a neck tie she sports on Sunday & was speechless for hours after she got the locket. She can hardly walk when she comes forth with it she is so overpowered. It is more than I can stand to see her at prayers. When with me she conducts herself well & like a Christian, but on alternate Sundays I stay at home & she goes with Mary, & sits in a solitary corner wth her by way of being secluded & apart from the vulgar, for "the Mess" sit by themselves, & the men w^d not share the forms with the Indians, the Fort Indians wont sit beside the tent ones & so forth. Tash hoards up all the peppermint drops her papa gives her during the fortnight, & Mary Betsy & she continue sucking them thro' the whole service. She has also a 2 oz. phial with a common wine bottle cork hacked down to fit it. In this recherché utensil, is a piece of sponge, w^{ch} was once saturated with aromatic vinegar, w^{ch} Mary & she apply to their noses every few minutes.

M^{rs} Loudoun has written me a long letter. I am really so busy sewing things for the children, & am afraid to get up earlier than my usual time 7 oclock, or to sit up later for fear of making myself ill that I have resolved to write no one. There are so many people running out & in that I can scarcely get out for a walk on the platform. I had almost everything to do after my things came by the ship on the 18th flannels for Harg^{ve} Tash & Mary Jane as they will require them before I am well at the very best. The Rupert will sail in a few days, I think I shall not be much longer & hope to manage a few lines to Mama by the Prince of Wales w^{ch} will sail about the usual time.² If you w^d be so good as to write M^{rs} L. & tell her how I am situated, acquainting her with the result when

¹Simpson to Hargrave, June 18, 1850: "In sending out a married man as surgeon for York Factory, the Governor and Committee could not have been aware of the serious inconvenience that would be occasioned. . . . I have to beg you will place Mr. & Mrs. Wills in the quarters occupied in the winter of 1848/49 by Mr. Clouston."

²The *Prince of Wales* was cleared out on September 6, but did not sail until the twelfth.

y^u know it yrslf. If you could also write Mary Hamilton, I had a rather desponding letter from her & am afraid that she is very low.

I feel greatly shocked about the Macalister proceedings. Hargrave declares it is all & wholly Keiths fault, that he was evidently harsh, & had alienated his wifes affection & lost her respect by his own enormities. There is something fearful in the idea of an old woman like M^{rs} Macalister, with daughters about her, going wrong at all, & she seems to be perfectly outrageous. The lieges here are chuckling over Lord Lincolns domestic troubles, & it is rather good as he assailed the private characters of the gentlemen in this country— Lord John Russel invited the world to come forward & give evidence, but his Lordship declined & a grave letter from Ben Hawes, assures the Comp^y there is no blot on its character nor flaw in its Charter.

There are no fewer than 3 medicoes here just now, all from Guys, our own M^r Wood of the Rupert & M^r Saunders of the P^{ce} of Wales, w^{ch} is a most magnificent vessel & a fast sailer. She carries 1,000 tons. The Comp^y bought her new at Southampton. There are also 2 chartered schooners only one of w^{ch} has yet arrived.¹

I had a letter from Dugald dated last Jan^y from Honololu. He says he has applied for leave of absence but had hitherto been unsuccessful & is not well pleased. He says nothing of California & I dont think he means to go there himself altho' he w^d like to do a little business on his own account. He was better I believe from what he says quite well but very cross about the expence that Vancouver Island put the Chief Factors & C. Traders to & the great extra labor it cost him. He had had a cheerful letter from poor Aleck.

It is thought that Frances Mactavish will be married to a person of decent character, but scarcely a gentleman even in Canada. I believe Sir George will prevent it if he can, but the poor thing is knocking about the world & when M^{rs} Finlayson wrote me in May, Frances was living with her half breed sister Flora, M^{rs} Frazer whose husband died lately & who is I believe in a boarding house in Montreal with her children at school— Even M^{rs} Pyke lives in a boarding house. It pulls down my spirits to look forward to what destiny may be in store for poor Tash &

¹See introduction, p. cxxxiii.

Mary Jane— They are both perfectly well. Tash often distresses me with her white face & small appetite with bare bones but she is tall & very active & is never unwell— Mary Jane is tolerably plump & as brisk as possible. She was greatly elated on seeing her spoon, but as spoons are toys & generally used for hammers I have taken it away & put it with Doeys & Tash's till she gets sense. They use strong German silver in the nursery & even they are a good deal clouted.

Y^u will not be able to read this crossing so I had as well stop. Hoping y^u say what is civil to M^{rs} Loudoun & Mary Hamilton & also to Lockhart to whom I shall not write at present. Tell him when y^u do so that I am going home & will have better courage to write him when we hear of his arrival than here, when in uncertainty as to how or where he is. I am sure you must have many an anxious thought about poor Aleck & him. I shall write Mama before I close this but am now very tired

Y^r m^o aff sis

L H

Hargrave & Tash send their best love to y^u & M^{rs} L

66. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

York Factory 27-[29] Augst 1850

My dear Mama

The Rupert being nearly ready Hargrave has determined on sending her away when loaded without waiting for the P. of Wales. I believe he has decided on not writing Papa till the latter vessel goes but I shall send y^{rs} now, & may perhaps be able to write a few lines again. I was much obliged to y^u for y^r present & was astonished to get such a specimen of M^{rs} Bars work. It is a great change from cheeses—& I hope will prove more remunerating—

The Fort is not so gay this season as it was last time, but we have a number of obscure people from home. First a M^r Jeffrey from Edin^h who has come from the Botanical society there to collect plants & is going across the Mountains. Then an English dominie M^r Pridham, who is going to manage the Bishops school¹

¹The bishop of Rupert's Land had taken over all the property of the Red River Academy upon the death of John Macallum, which took place on the day of the bishop's arrival at Red River. Mr. Pridham was brought out to head the boys' school, and the girls' school was discontinued for a time.

at Red river. A mightily genteel "person" who has come to attend M^{rs} MacAllum & her 2 girls on the passage home & who gets £20 for the job. She says she came for the benefit of her health w^{ch} has been long in a declining state. She required the greatest attention from Steward & D^r on the way out & what the unfortunate delicate M^{rs} MacCallum will do going home with rough weather & 2 daughters to look after as well as her fastidious delicate maid I cant understand. There are last of all a "M^r & M^{rs} Deans" from Londⁿ who are on their way to R^d R^r as valet & lady's maid to the new Gov^r & his wife, M^r & M^{rs} Colville who are to winter at Lower Ft Garry Red River. This woman seems very suitable. I have seen her repeatedly & have always parted from her with increased approbation. She has been married for 17 years, has no family, & works like a slave both for herself & her messmate, the genteel one, who looks at her as if she expected danger from her neighborhood. I tried to get Mary to face & be civil to them, but she refused point blank. "I hate to speak to the English. My sister that was in the Artillery said no flesh c^d live in a barrack with them, they're a wheen taupies & thinks a great deal of themselves." So I had to look to their being attended to myself, & Mary takes to flight when she sees them approach, when she is out with the children. The best of it is, she harangues the valet & cross questions him as to his prospects & expectations when she gets hold of him apart from the ladies—

When Willie was coming up he met M^r Ermatinger waiting at Norway H^e for the canoe in w^{ch} his little girl & he were to go to Canada. He had written M^r Sinclair to meet him there & take M^{rs} E. off his hands. Neither Sinclair nor his wife was there nor took any notice of his request. M^{rs} E. was living with him in great harmony. They had separate rooms opening off one hall. W^m had one, Frank a 2nd, M^{rs} E. a 3rd, someone else a 4th, but Frank walked out & in to his wifes. She made his room tidy & he upbraided her when any thing was out of sorts in it, & there they were. We will soon hear whether he carries her on to Lac La Pluie & leaves her with her father, but even the Norway H^e people were astonished at his mode of proceeding. I did not like to ask what had become of the Baby but presume it has been left at nurse till its papa takes it.

We have got 20 pensioners each wth a wife, all Paddies &

on an average 2 children. Captⁿ Herd gives them a bad enough character but is reserved in comparison of their serjeant who declares that any thing like them in military shape he never even heard of— William is heavier looking than when he left us but not exactly stout. He seems dull. I wish somehow that we had been able to clear out this Fall in case of some change of plans. M^{rs} Finlayson wrote me in May that Lady Simpson was to be confined in a few weeks & had been very ill, so much so that they had great fears about her. Sir George was up here & had made arrangements with their D^{rs} wife that Lady S. should live in their house in Montreal during the time as D^r MacCulloch c^d not leave home to go as often or attend as long at Lachine as w^d be necessary. M^{rs} MacC. was to do her uttermost as well as her husband, w^{ch} was a great relief to M^{rs} Finlayson who seems very nervous. The youngest child¹ is quite as old as Tash I think 3 months older. She is called the Baby.

29th Augst The last boats arrived this day & bring intelligence that M^r Colville had arrived at R^d R^r & found it in a deplorable condition. I mentioned last year that M^{rs} Ballantines² character w^d not bear much trifling wth & that she was at least very imprudent in flirting with Captⁿ Foss. Last May M^{rs} Caldwell Miss Anderson & M^{rs} Black³ declined to hold any intercourse with her, & M^{rs} Pelly with drew from the Mess at w^{ch} she & her husband had a seat as well as Foss & at w^{ch} M^{rs} B— presided. The Captⁿ to the Pellys amazement cited them to defend themselves in an action for defamation, for accusing him of having criminal intercourse with a married woman, damages each £200. The mess cook,⁴ an Orkney man & his wife were tried as parties at the same time & M^r & M^{rs} Black were to have their turn when the Pelly case⁵ was over. The cook & wife were included to prevent their appearing as witnesses. M^{rs} B. was sent from her husbands house & confided to the care of M^r Recorder Thom, who was judge in the case &

¹Margaret McKenzie Simpson (b. September 28, 1843; d. 1929). A son, John Henry Pelly Simpson, was born to Sir George and Lady Simpson on June 14, 1850.

²Mrs. John Ballenden.

³See letter 52.

⁴John, brother of George Davidson, cook at York Factory.

⁵See *Report from the Select Committee on the Hudson's Bay Company, 1857*, pp. 301-5.

in whose family she remained till the proceedings were over. Foss came boldly out M^{rs} B. appeared in court as a witness & harangued the public accusing Pelly of having a pique at her because she had rejected "his advances" the previous winter, he being then one of her husbands clerks. Pelly declares that she is wrong & that she, not he, had made "the advances"— This she, as the Bench Report says, *calmly* denied on oath. M^r Thom charged M^{rs} Cochran the clergymans wife & M^{rs} Black with perjury because they had given evidence that they had seen M^{rs} B. & Cap^t F. behaving in a very free style to one another. Poor Miss Anderson was worried wth metaphisical questions by said Thom who addressed the jury informing them that altho M^{rs} B. might not have so much starch in her face she had as much virtue in her heart as any *exotic* (meaning not half breed) that she was the choicest specimen of native modesty & grace. The jury gave a verdict for Foss, damages agst the Pellys £300 & agst Cookie £100— w^{ch} the Captⁿ generously declined accepting— Poor Pelly paid down his & must have borrowed it from Black. The suit agst the Blacks was then withdrawn. Foss has been here & has been recalled by an order from the horse guards. He is to take the newly arrived pensioners to R^d R^r & then hasten to Londⁿ. Major Caldwell will rejoice. M^{rs} B is back to her husband who is as great with Foss as ever. During the short time he has been here he has had 2 letters from him.

Harg^{ve} has given a bill for £5 for Doeys travelling expences, w^{ch} I enclose to Flora, who must read this letter for y^u as I have been ill, & flew to finish it, the best way I c^d. My woes are coming hard upon me. It *may* be a false alarm as I thought I was laid up last night, but it passed over. M^{rs} MacAllum & her two daughters have just come & have brought 2 boys of M^r Ballantynes,¹ & Annabella Ross who goes home under her care. Miss Ross is 20 & goes to school. I have not been able to see them. If I cant write y^u will hear from H. who will let Papa know how things end. With kindest love

Ever y^r m^o affec dau^{tr}

[not signed]

¹John Ballenden.

67. TO JAMES HARGRAVE

York Factory 10th August 1851

My dearest Hargrave

Your letter of 25th July arrived last night about dusk & the good report of y^r health was confirmed by a very stylish document which "Nicol" had the kindness to write me regarding his interview with you in Swampy Lake. He assures me he never saw y^u look so well, & altho' the dwelling at S^t Mary's is under the Fall, still in spite of fogs & such consequences the climate being unquestionably healthy he is confident y^u will not loose what y^u have already gained on the voyage & that you will be very comfortable. We are all as usual. Dug^{d1} bellows Papa glibly enough now, & when I ask him in [the] night when he is roaring, "Where's Papa", he pauses & looks expectantly as if he thought y^u were there. We have had a tremendous tooth cutting for 3 weeks past. He has now 7— & the last of the milk teeth is on its way. You may believe that he has got them pretty easily when I say we have not seen the D^r since you left us— Tash & Mary Jane are also going on satisfactorily— We have positively had only one hot day since the Gov^{r2} went away & the rain has been unusually abundant. Every day we have many heavy showers— I had hoped that the ship w^d have been here before I wrote— This day 11 years we landed. It is a large portion of our life.

Before M^r Ballenden left York he gave Willie a hint & some thing more that M^{rs} Wills had not flattered any of us here in her communications to M^{rs} Colville, & mentioned one thing w^{ch} has finished the little deviless in my opinion. She abused the cooking. M^{rs} C. said she found it better than any where else in the country. Oh said the Doctress, it is I assure you perfectly changed since y^u came, every thing is very different— I vowed that across her threshold I should never step, & she has become dignified since she got a house of her own, & has only returned my visits, so that we meet on the platform where I flatter myself I combine graciousness & majesty in my demeanor. Ballenden wound up his harangue by calling her a malevolent lying bad woman— The D^r made an ample apology to M^r Clare for his conduct to him w^{ch} the latter

¹Dugald John.²Eden Colville (1819-1893).

received with Cockney politeness & assured him he was satisfied— The first day Clare read prayers immediately after he had begun the D^r & his wife passed the window with a great noise. On coming out we saw them on the launch posting up & down— Clare remarked to the inmates of the guard room that he w^d not have dared to exhibit had M^r Harg^{ve} been here. He has never come to prayers since y^u left—

When I waken at day break it makes me miserable to think that in all probability you are either in y^r canoe or preparing to start. I have resolved that on the morn^g of the 28th I shall feel easy in the conviction that y^u are fairly housed. Baby was 11 months old on Friday. I intend if there is a cow on board ship to wean him on the 25th of this month. If there is none I must at whatever inconvenience continue till I get home. He can stand now with a hold of the sofa or chair & looks well— I wish we were all under your wing again. I shall not enter into my fears & troubles now, but shall not spare you when I get part of my performances in the travelling way over.

Willie has been busy with that weariful indent & much disturbed by the bad weather. Every thing has been in readiness for Captⁿ Herd & his incumbrances for several days past. Anderson packed my things. If the hair trunk gets to you before we meet I warn you to unpack the upper half very gingerly as he wrapt some brittle ware in my Fox tail *boa* w^{ch} y^u will perceive near the surface. I do not know any thing likely to interest you. M^r Christie sent me 6 musk ox tongues & 2 moose d^o w^{ch} W^m has had packed up in case they may prove a fairlie to any one— Poor MacKay was very ill while here & his boats were kept waiting at the P^t of Marsh for 2 days, till he was able to set off. He has promised to send me 40 Ermine skins that his wife has, stray ones she had collected over a period of 15 years. I gave him abundance of tea & sugar in consideration of his polite intentions— No body ever had such a bad pen as mine as it slips about miserably— I fear y^u w^d not get y^r black inexpressibles repaired during y^r very short stay at Norway H^e & the poor Gombroon did not seem adapted for hard work. At all events I trust in God that you are now well & free from trouble either of body or mind. I presume Sir George is now fairly off— M^{rs} Colville shocked me by the information that he has of late had two very severe apoplectic seizures & that

being aware that he may die at any moment he had set his family affairs in order before he left Lachine for Moose. I shall add a little more to this before I enclose it, but thought it best to have it ready in case of accidents. Believe me ever dearest Hargrave y^{rs} m^o affec^y

L H

68. TO JAMES HARGRAVE

York Factory 12-[13], Augst 1851

My dearest Hargrave

I did not mention in my other letter that Billy More had brought y^r 1st from Oxford & received the reward of a globe glass as full of brandy as I c^d hold it. He required all his management to get fairly into my own presence. He knocked at Willie's door & looked greatly bothered however he had sufficient candor to say that he wanted to see the Mistress, & finally bolted in on the children & me & solemnly deposited the letter on the table staring me full in the face. I remembered y^r injunction & got up from the floor where I had been arranging Baby's affairs & recompensed the Red Head. Tash & Mary Jane screamed fearfully after y^u had gone, & the guns w^{ch} tore my feelings in pieces, had quite the contrary effect on them for they spread themselves up & began to count & criticize the amount of noise they made. Mary Jane is a queer little soul. She left Mary a few days ago out on the Platform & came home to me saying with an old fashioned shake of her head "My love you'll never see Tash again she's off with the Canada Canoe". Who took her, I said. "Cucum". They always bring Uncle in to tea punctually, so I having told him this romance, he expressed astonishm^t on seeing Tash. Mary J. at once said Bab^t brought her back in a boat. She is still very thin & very nervous poor little soul. She harangues about Papa & the *Sault*.

We had 50 Salmon from Churchill. They were not exactly 1st chop, or Garson damaged them. George Lootit is pointed in his attentions to Mary & has even got the length of intimating that it is his intention of leaving off smoking & taking a wife. Their flirtations being carried on with open doors between the nursery

¹Mary Jane refers to herself by her nickname.

& me & Mary's not finding it necessary to mitigate her naturally loud voice I have the benefit of their conversations w^{ch} on Mary's side consist entirely of invectives agst Orkney men & Indian women varied by abuse of old Garson in w^{ch} his assistant & successor cordially joins—

13th Last night between 8 & 9, the ship guns were reported & Will^m tells me that she is now coming in. I will close my letter when the packet has come. It has not yet left the vessel altho' now, nine a.m. I feel awfully nervous. I hope y^u will find letters waiting for y^u from M^r Young, for I will not be able to write much by this opport^y & it will be long before the packet reaches you. Tash bids me give you her best love & is loud in her promises as to what she is to do when she has the ability— We are all at this moment—[incomplete]

The packet has come & all right as the enclosed will show y^u. An officer, a Governess¹ & her 2 daughters, also M^r & M^{rs} Sam Grey & their 3 children are all back on Willie's hands. He is going to send them (the Greys) to Churchill— Mama & Papa were well & back at Kilcst. M^{rs} Webster as usual writes me in the kindest manner & speaks highly of Doch. Our berths are secured, & the Captⁿ reported to be in high glee. I guess the canoe will soon be going so in spite of a blinding headache the result of letter reading I shall close my despatches. The passengers have not come on shore yet. There are 29 only in the steerage. One of them wishes to be employed as a waiter & Johnny's² doom is sealed. He tells his friends that M^r Mactavish is worse than M^r Hargrave & complains of spiritual destitution, cant get a minister to marry him. He has bought a tent & is all ready for M^r Mowatt.³ I fear y^u will not be able to read this but I shall not say die. Dan MacTaggart is still flourishing. They had not

¹Mrs. Mills came out to Red River through the Governor's wife, Mrs. Colville, and Mrs. Macallum. She was a person of superior education, and became head of St. Cross Ladies' School, where the daughters of the Company's officers were educated. It was under Church auspices, and was held in a building shared with the boys' school which later became St. John's College, Winnipeg, now affiliated with the University of Manitoba.

²John Annance.

³Edward Mowat, of Red River, one of the best and most careful freighters between York Factory and Red River. See Rich, *Simpson's Athabasca journal*, p. 459.

heard again from Lock^t or Aleck. I fear you will not hear from Doch till this reaches you so that you will be long in suspense. The ship is safely anchored in 5 Fath^m Hole. Flora says that Mary Hamilton lives in great style but poor Marg^t is no better. The Loudouns are pretty well but poor John Buchanan going rapidly— I shall reserve my comments on the Lady passengers for another occasion, not having seen them & if I dont get my letter out of my hands I shall have a fever from anxiety— I hear the exhibition¹ was going on swimmingly. Miss Allen writes that she does not think M^{rs} MacAllum & her step mother pull well w^{ch} she attributes to the fact that the latter thinks too much of herself. She is philosophical on the subject of 2 young ladies coming out with their mama & imagines they expect to find situations. She thinks they pay their own way poor souls. Their name is Mills & wont M^{rs} Wills cotton with them on that account for the D^{rs} aunt is Mills. I must now leave off. I lost my only pen & now write with a little stump w^{ch} has no handle & is a great worry to me. Hoping you will graciously excuse blots &c. caused by bullying the children, & Tash drying them with her pinafore, with kindest love from us all I ever am my dearest Hargrave

Yours very affection^{ly}

LETITIA HARGRAVE

69. To JAMES HARGRAVE

38 Finsbury Square [London] Oct^r 5 [6th and 10th, 1851]

My dearest Hargrave

We are all here after a smart but rough passage. We came on board at York on Sunday the 7th Sept^r & left the ship on Friday the 3rd Oct^r., M^r Klein being in waiting. We sailed on the 9th having been in 5 fathom hole for 2 days. Our party² was large, M^r & M^{rs} James with their 3 children & 2 others a Cowley & a boy of M^r Hunter's, also Miss Mowat, & M^r O'Brien,³ D^r Saunders

¹The Great International Exhibition of 1851 held in Hyde Park, London.

²See introduction, p. cxl.

³John O'Brien was being retired. See biography, Rich, *McLoughlin letters*, second series, pp. 398-9.

& Captⁿ Pullen¹ & Lieutenant Hooper from the North. The 2 latter paid the children & me the most devoted attention. M^r Hooper in particular called in the after Cabin every morning & every afternoon to invite me to walk on deck & when the weather was boisterous came & fed the children in the most experienced manner. Altogether he made himself very useful. Captⁿ Pullen is married & has 2 children he has not seen his wife for 4 years, & attached himself particularly to Master Dugald whom he carried up & down the companion much to Mary's relief & the Baby's safety. We had another passenger. I mentioned that the Bishop had got out a Governess & her 2 daughters to take charge of the Lady's school. When they reached York the elder girl was so ill that her mother sent her back under my care with the information that she had no choice but to separate as her husband had died of consumption & the ship doctor alleged that Mary was similarly affected. She then told me that Captⁿ Herd had brought a son of Wigram the ship builder to Orkney with them & that the gentleman had made himself so agreeable that her daughter had formed an attachment to him & lost her health. She is a very nice pretty girl, but is evidently in a bad way tho' whether M^r W. has anything to answer for or not I cannot say. I gave her into the hands of her guardian's son who was waiting at the Dock & who received her most kindly. He (the son) is an Oxonian & looked very pleasing & gentle.

I have not yet heard from Scot^d. We did not get our letters sent on shore till we reached Deal, as the weather was frightfully stormy all the time we were in the Channel. I must now do justice to poor Captⁿ Herd. He gave Miss Mills & me the 2 large cabins in the after part. Mary had the 3rd & he coolly put his chronometers into the 4th thereby excluding Miss Mowat or M^{rs} James who had theirs in the gun room. He also gave *us* a hot supper every night & a bottle of champagne every day in *private* after dinner. Mary Clark had 3 bumpers of stout per diem, & Buffy was on his knee when idle, during the whole voyage. Indeed

¹Ross papers: Simpson to Ross, December 15, 1851: "Pullen appears to have been duly appreciative of kind attentions shown him at Norway House and York on his way home which may have dissipated the bile [against the Company] that seemed to have been gathering while he was in McKenzie River."

he was perfectly kind to the children. M^r Smith¹ & he called last even^g & I have got money from the latter. I hope I wont horrify y^u with my expences, but I shall have some outlay before I make the children & myself like other people. I can only promise y^u a faithful account of my expenditure. I was disappointed in not finding a letter from y^u but M^r Smith says y^u are fairly at the Sault w^{ch} is a comfort as I may look every day for tidings.

Have y^u heard of old Panum's² marriage? He had a superb wedding 3 days before the ship sailed. The bride was a widow from Orkney her name M^{rs} Flett who came out by the ship & set up in Red River as a dress maker, with her relative M^r Cumming of Baring's [Beren's] River's patronage. She is a "Native" but has been in Orkney for 30 years. Wilson went to Willie & asked his advice having as he said made up his mind while he was escorting her up from the ship to the house. The woman had an excellent character & is very industrious, her age 37. All the beauty & fashion at York assisted. M^{rs} James & Miss Mowat who was bridesmaid mustered with the Yorkers, M^{rs} Anderson among others, on one side of the room, Willie concealed modestly behind the stove with Capt^{ns} Pullen & Herd. Lieut^{ent} Hooper Tash & me took the opposite side & diverted ourselves— The lieutenant was clear for popping to Miss Mowat & being married at the same time.

I have many things to tell y^u about our voyage but shall reserve them. I have shown great forbearance to M^{rs} James, about the children especially Tash to whom she showed an antipathy & was often unfeeling to, but every one on board hated her. She kept up her dignity as an invalide & her husband washed dressed & nursed the children. Captⁿ Pullen declares she was shamming all the time. She eat 5 pickled onions & pork in proportion to breakst had brandy & water at 11 a.m. & again before turning in. We parted good friends. Miss Mowat is to live with them, rather a queer chaperone & an equally queer protégée. Willie was very low when we left. He went on board with us & requested Captⁿ Pullen to take my part in case of any bobbery either with Herd or M^{rs} James— Willie was afraid of the ship Capt^{ns} over attention or

¹William Gregory Smith, assistant secretary of the Company at Hudson's Bay House. See Rich, *Robertson's letters*, p. 242; Rich, *McLoughlin letters*, second series, p. 387.

²Robert Wilson.

familiarity. We got on wonderfully. The children Tash & Mary Jane were constantly getting sea sick, but I never was off duty nor c^d I get so much as a stretch on my back during the day I was so frightened for damage to the girls, & Buffy got so fat & large that Mary c^d hardly stagger under his weight, so that I took the whole charge of Tash & M.J. both night & day. Dug^d has cut 3 large back teeth since we left York. I am so waiting for news of Doey before I decide on what day I shall leave for Scot^d. M^r & M^{rs} Klein are as kind as possible—

6th I have just received a letter from M^r Young intimating that he had got a note from Flora, to say that she w^d be at St. Andrews this day to take charge of Doch, whose joy in having such an indulgence as seeing the exhibition after all hope of such a thing had died away, knew no bounds. He says he is positively wild wth delight. M^r Young says that Providence has permitted him to enter again into the state in w^{ch} he was when we were last in this country & that M^{rs} Young will rejoice to see me. I shall hear Flora's account. M^r Smith has called again & introduced two sisters two very ill-favored looking women. It will put me to heavy costs for cab hire to return the visit but it must be done as they made an apology for M^{rs} S. not being able. Poor Webster Simpson also called with a message from his mother & an invitation for Flora Doch & me to spend Thursday at Stamford Hill. He looks dreadfully ill & was so kind & like M^{rs} Finlayson in his manner that I agreed without hesitation. I am sure y^u will approve. I have had no other invitation. Old Roberts called this morn^g & I sent for his son about our skins— M^r Smith seems moved with compassion towards Maggy Mowat. He called at M^r James' lodgings & found her nursing the children & otherwise unpleasantly occupied. I know Maggy w^d give her £2,000 to have me for her duenna instead of the parson's lady. Miss Mills & I got on beautifully. Willie left his room in order that she might be under my roof while we were at York, & I have received very strong expressions of gratitude from her friends here, w^{ch} is always some comfort. John Miles¹ called for me yesterday & offered his services, w^{ch} I politely declined. He looks very like a Sinclair, & is ludicrously lean poor man altogether shockingly *half-breedish*. Doch has set his heart on seeing the Thames tunnel Flora says he is in a fearful state of excitement. I expect them every hour.

¹Son of Robert Seaborn Miles and Elizabeth Sinclair Miles.

10th Octob^r. Since I wrote the enclosed I am sorry to tell y^u that both Tash & Mary Jane have been very unwell. They are now better indeed Tash is as well as ever, but Mary Jane is not yet out of the D^{rs} hands, altho' greatly recovered. M^r Klein sent for his own medico who thinks that the ailment was caused by weakness of the stomach after sea sickness as they both suffered much on the voyage & always screamed my stomach. Doey & Flora arrived this morning at 7 o'clock, poor Doch looks very well indeed. He is not tall but broad & sturdy looking. M^r Young married lately, what Flora calls a most delightful woman, very lady like accomplished & a niece of Allan the Painter. Flora advises us strongly to place Tash with her. At the same time [word torn] & M^{rs} Webster seem afraid of the climate of St. Andrews. It appears that people are perpetually applying mustard blisters & leeches there & even Doey never wants a slight cough. He looks extremely well & Flora says he is a very good boy. The 2 boys whom M^r Y. had taken as boarders were blaguards of 15 & 17 who drank & smoked. Flora expressed strong disapprobation to M^r Y. of their sleeping in the room with Doch. But they are both away & M^{rs} Young will not be so easily imposed upon. I had a very kind letter from old M^r Christie yesterday inviting me & flock to visit him. They are preparing for a visit to the exhibition with M^r K. Doch will write y^u of his impressions by the next mail.¹ If we are all well we mean to leave on Wednes^y by steam.

I wish we were settled as I am wretched here, & am sure have aged 10 years since we parted. Papa & Mama are perfectly well, Ugadale bothering Papa mightily about £500. It seems that Papa never will be out of hot water. Tash Mary Jane Flora & Doey all join me in kindest love to you & hoping to hear from y^u very soon I remain my dearest Harg^{ve}

Y^{rs} m^o affec^{ly}

L HARGRAVE

70. TO MRS. DUGALD MACTAVISH

[*St. Andrews*'] 18 Nov^r 1851

My dear Mama,

I am glad to be able to say that the children are all better, Tash & Buffy perfectly well, & poor wee Bab improving. Dr.

¹See appendix, p. 299.

Adamson maintains that there is nothing wrong with her & desires me to feed her well, with beef tea &c. w^{ch} of course I do, tho' she hates it & w^d rather drink chocolate & eat lumps of butter & sugar. I am in rather better spirits about her now, than I have been since she left York. She has no cold. Tash went to school today for the first time since she took her cough, but I will not send her to the dancing this week, till I see how she gets on. Mary is barking away as hard as ever, & taking paragoric literally in tea spoonfuls. I have had 2 or three threatenings of sore throat but nothing more, caused by changing my dress. I had a long letter from Mrs. Webster, she is not at all well. Mr. Hooper wrote me a few lines last week to say that he was passing his examinations & studying 16 hours a day & that he has volunteered to return to the North, & with 6 Esquimaux only, renew the search for Sir John Franklin or his remains. He does not say whether the Admiralty had accepted his offer. Captⁿ Pullen has gone to Plymouth where he means to live quietly for an indefinite time. I wonder what he will think of the Lieutenant, & Husky project. Mr. H. "got up" 2 newspapers during the voyage with the aid of Dr. Beddom, & he says they are to be published in the *Nautical Review*.¹ If the "Comp^y" get hold of it their dignity will be ruffled as Mr. Wilson's marriage is made a great deal of, & willie & the Mess spoken of as the Gov^r & his staff. It was a fearful night of thunder & rain, & the said Gov^r concealed himself behind the stove, & sat drying his clothes thro' out the ceremony. Capt^{ns} Pullen & Herd Mr. Hooper Tash & I sat on a line with him & the rest of the comp^y kept the opposite side of the hall.

There is to be a party at Miss Campbell's this even^g. I wish she w^d invite the Balyshers, among the other professors. I daresay Mrs. MacDonald would not go, but the Dr. has been at her house already, having been introduced by a Mrs. Blair to her while living as he calls it "en garçon". Mrs. Broughton called on Friday to ask the children to spend Satur^y afternoon with them, but they were not well enough to venture. She has been very kind calling & seeing them, so has poor Mrs. Young whose craze for getting Bab to live with her seems to have gone off. She came up

¹The *Nautical magazine*, sometimes referred to as the *Nautical review*, late in 1851 announced the forthcoming article by Hooper as referred to by Letitia, but it never appeared, probably owing to Hooper's ill health early in 1852, which ended in his death.

one night after 9, to see her as she c^d not go to her bed, she had thought her so ill when she saw her at 4. As she has now begun to eat & play I am relieved from miserable dread & can hope that she will very soon be perfectly well. I wish very much that Papa & you could see her. She was not right when Flora was with us, & I dont think they got at all acquainted, but she is very affect^{ed} when she is well, or actually ill. Since Buffy was weaned I have taken charge of her & it has made her rather exacting & I daresay she will not like being left to share Mary's care again. Tash has just broken Mrs. Pringle's ewer in my room, & looks rather daunted for once in her life.

I remain y^r very affectionate,

L H

71. TO JAMES HARGRAVE¹

[*Kilchrist, January 31, 1852*]

I wrote the agent who is married to a daughter of the late Provost Watson & received this sheet in reply— The terms are greatly under those of Cunard & the ubiquitous Tom Potts has explored the "Glasgow" from stem to stern & pronounces her perfect. It is a pity that there is not a Glas^w steamer to sail in June as y^u expect— I hope however that y^u will have no difficulty in changing y^r time for leaving the Sault for one fortnight, & as we *must* secure our Cabin long before I shall feel great anxiety till I get y^r final instructions— When I go to Glas^w I shall explain my position to M^r Langlands & am sure he will help me as far as he can without damage or risk to the interests of the Comp^y. Then I shall hope to hear early in May when I am to leave Britain & whether we are to wait for the Glas^w on the 1st July— Langlands will propitiate the Captⁿ in our behalf & if by any chance y^u s^hd not reach New York before us, he will either let us stay on board or find quarters for us— I have only been 2ce in Campⁿ since we came, & on one occasion called for M^r McTaggart at his office—

¹This letter was written on the reverse side of a letter dated January 26, 1852, which Letitia had received from Mathew Langlands of the Glasgow and New York Steamship Company, suggesting dates of sailing, and suitable accommodation for herself and her party.

He sent a kind message to y^u—& looks wonderfully crouse— Papa & he never meet—Ugadale came & sat all yested^y with Papa, & delighted him by his acct of a battle between the new Sheriff & the Campⁿ Magistrates. Ugadale stood up & performed the Magistrates, but kept his seat while mimicking the Sh. who spoke of his judicial dignity. The fight was for the Bench. The Sh. got & kept it, & the Baillies followed old doited Nathan Harvey into a back room where they wished they had the old Sherra again for when he came in, he made an apology for intruding & went out. You will remember that there is only one Court room, w^{ch} must serve all parties.

I am wearying miserably to see y^u once more & to find myself at home with the children. I dont remember anything else to tell y^u. I hope I have made myself intelligible about Tash & Doch. They send their love. Doch is a *very good* & nice looking boy w^{ch} is a g^t comfort & I must repeat that Young has taken great pains with him. Tash & he agree admirably.¹

72. TO JAMES HARGRAVE

14 Hill Street [Edin.] 8th May '52

My dearest Hargrave

I have just received y^r kind letter of 27th March in w^{ch} y^u desire me to go out by the Glas^w on 1st July— Y^u will ere now have got my next letter telling y^u of the disaster w^{ch} made it necessary for the Captⁿ to turn back so that we shall have to go on the 1st June, & I am in fear that things may go amiss, & that y^u may not know of this change. It is doubtful whether this letter will reach y^u as I am afraid it may not get away till the 14. I went over to St. Andrews to take my last leave of poor Tash & Doch. Tash was in grievous affliction & cried long & bitterly, tho' so quietly that no one w^d have known unless they had looked at her poor swelled face & dripping handkerchief— Doch poor soul saw me off in the coach at 8 in the morn^g & behaved well. I staid at M^{rs} Broughtons who was very kind to them & me.

Tom Potts has been ill all winter & has been in the country for the benefit of his health, I cant imagine what ails him, but he is as thin as a whipping post, & very lame in one foot. He only came

¹For incidents during the interval between this letter and the following one (January 26 –May 8, 1852), see introduction, pp. cxlii-cxliii.

home on Tuesday & is going off on Monday in a war steamer to Stornaway wth one of his friends a Lieut^{nt} Risk. I have only lately discovered that the people from whom he got y^r newspaper, left off sending it long before the quarter was out. Flora thought I had ordered it to be sent here & took no notice. I instantly got Potts to go, & they are to give y^u an equal number of papers. I am going home on Wednes^{dy} to get the children & Mary in order for the voyage & must be in Glas^w with them on Saturday week the 29th as we will sail on Tuesday. The Chambers arrived from Londⁿ on Monday & on Wed^{ny} I had an invitation to dinner w^{ch} I accepted & will give y^u the details when we meet.

I am glad to hear such good accounts of y^r health. M^r & M^{rs} Duncan rushed off to Londⁿ on Satur^y. He seems quite renovated but she is not at all well— They are perpetually running about— Poor Bobby M^cBrair cannot get his discharge from the Bank & is miserably cast down— Y^u w^d be amazed to see the utter stillness that prevails—the shops seem deserted & every one complaining— Things are not cheaper than they were 5 years ago, except bread w^{ch} is reduced. I went down to Portobella & called for the Eddingtons who are living there in g^t style. The *Potato flour* mill has failed & Mary Jane is involved to the extent of six thousand pounds. This will make a hole in their capital, but they seem quite easy upon it— M^{rs} Fleming is quite well & looks quite juvenile— The people say she was looking after John MacNeal South Park whom y^u may remember meeting in Campⁿ during his wifes life— I think this is a calumny.

Flora writes that the children are well & have enjoyed to the uttermost the beautiful spring we have had— They are never in the house— Papa & Mama have pressed me much to leave Mary Jane with them. They are extremely fond of her & perhaps it might be better for her not to go out.— But poor Buffy w^d be lonely & I c^d not venture without y^r sanction. Altogether I think I am right in taking her back to you. She is quite strong now & has grown a great deal. Flora says she took her to make a visit one day— She got tired of her entertainers & in the most sentimental manner said she must go home to her bible. She objects to visitors in the nursery because she cant say her prayers when they are present & sets up for a person of high religious feature— Tash is getting on very nicely & spells words of 3 syllables— She has got very much tamed poor little soul. I shall weary to hear if

y^u approve of our going on Tuesday fortnight, & whether we may have long to wait y^r arrival in New York— At any rate dont disturb yrself about us as we will have the countenance of the Captⁿ at least, & perhaps there may be one of the owners on board, in w^{ch} case I shall get an introduction thro' the Agent, who is a most respectable man & a nephew of the late Captⁿ Flemings—

Papa had a letter from Dug^d on Friday— He says he will be here in Octob^r & that if the season is not too far advanced he means to take a run up to the Sault to see y^u. I w^d be sorry not to see him, he is to leave the Islands in July but does not say whether he will be in N. York. When I wrote him about Papa's affairs I told him I was to sail in July & that y^u w^d meet me on landing— I find it is impossible for me to get an answer from him before I go & Papas 1st bill will be due next Saturday, £50. It is wretched. He seems pretty well but fearfully changed both in his carriage & mind. Other people of his age are so too, but of course every one feels for those she is especially interested in. One thing is that he has become quite calm & placid in temper.

I write this in the hope that it will go by Southampton on Tuesday & that it will reach y^u in time to assure y^u that unless y^u write me that we are not to go on 1st June we shall certainly sail on that day & that y^u will find a letter from me at the Agents, & at the Post Office in New York, telling where we are staying— Poor M^{rs} M^cAllum threw herself out of her window about a week ago & hurt herself sadly— M^r Charles has taken her to an Asylum. It is wonderful that she was taken up alive. I have written hurriedly & ill. I have not heard of or from M^{rs} Finlayson since I came home. Bobby Ballantyne called one even^g at 8 at night & asked me to call for his mother. I thought this rather too unceremonious & have not complied nor has he come back. Rob^t Chambers told me he had thought of getting Bobby to write an article for him on Ruperts Land for the journal¹. I said nothing. All here join me in best love. Ever dearest Hargrave

Y^{rs} m^o affec^{ly}

[not signed]

¹An unsigned article entitled "The Fur-Trade and the Hudson's Bay Company," which appeared shortly afterwards in *Chambers' Repository of Instructive and Amusing Tracts* (the "journal"), no. 65, may possibly have been written by Ballantyne.

APPENDIX

1. JAMES HARGRAVE TO DUGALD MACTAVISH, SENIOR

London 23^d Feby 1838

My Dear Sir.—

Since writing you on the 16th from Edinburgh I proceeded on my journey to the South, and arrived here yesterday by the Mail in perfect safety.— This early and sudden departure from Scotland arose from having received from Gov^r Simpson a communication acquainting me with the necessity from unforeseen causes of my proceeding to the Indian country this spring and thus depriving me of the happiness which I expected, could I have been permitted to remain in this country till June.— Much of this anticipated happiness & indeed that on which the enjoyment of my future life I feel will greatly depend, allow me to say, my dear Sir, is connected with your approbation of what I am now to state to you.

My residence in your family during the few delightful days I spent at Kilchrist, made known to me the amiable mind, superior character & sweet disposition of your daughter Miss Mactavish. With me to witness such merit, was to admire—and to admire was to love.— My firm resolution on departure was to return to Scotland this Spring, as soon as my duty would allow me & with your approbation to endeavor to make my hand and fortune if possible, acceptable to that young Lady.— I feel all the boldness, & perceive many of the difficulties, much augmented by my present position, inherent in thus aspiring to the honor of an elected son in your family; but still hope, tho faint & distant, bids me with your favorable consideration to look forward to success.— I will not speak in praise of myself & further than that my name & character I am proud to think is esteemed by all those to whom I am fully known & whose good opinion would be honorable to me.— Gov^r Simpson has been acquainted wth my public & private conduct for nearly 20 years. An intimate & tried friend in the person of M^r Duncan Finlayson, one of our most valued officers—has thoroughly known me for nearly the same period;—

the latter purposes a tour this spring round the west coast of Scotland & will probably oblige me by calling on you regarding both my character & prospects in life.—To both these gentlemen I will with confidence refer you for such inquiries as a father will consider it his duty to make.— I will also by the present opportunity address Miss Mactavish & however my feelings may be wrung by the fears of hurting the cause nearest my heart, will fairly as I can, state what hardships may have to be borne & what sacrifices made in listening to my suit—in return for which I can only offer her an honest hand & a heart devoted to her honor & happiness.

Should this meet with her approbation, as also the sanction of yourself & M^{rs} Mactavish, I have already made arrangements that I shall again, please God, visit Britain two years hence, that is in the autumn of 1840 for the sole purpose of suing for the hand, to the possession of which I now aspire.

I have now said what my agitated feelings have scarcely permitted me to explain in intelligible language:— Yours & her answer may possibly reach me before I sail from hence in the beginning of next month, at all events it will find me next summer at York Factory:—and finally rest assured that whatever may be your decision I can never otherwise consider myself than yours most sincerely & affectionately—

J. HARGRAVE

P.S. I enclose the letter above mentioned which will better point out the lamented necessity by which I am thus early forced away from Britain & happiness.— I also enclose a couple of trifling presents to Miss Mactavish & to Miss Mary & of which I beg their acceptance.

J.H.

2. JAMES HARGRAVE TO LETITIA MACTAVISH

London 23^d Feby 1838

My Dear Madam

The unforeseen circumstance of being called on to leave my native land again at this early period is the occasion of my addressing

you by letter on a subject regarding which I have such cause to regret I had not personally explained myself to you before I bade farewell to the happy family at Kilchrist.— My residence among you [even] for a much shorter time than has been my good fortune, must have made me well aware of your merit and your amiable character. As it was, every day deepened the impression, and I now beg to say even under all the difficulties before me that with you and on the encouragement you may condescend to afford to my suit will certainly depend the happiness of my future life. When I reflect on the weak effect these words may produce in comparison with what I might have urged had I trusted nothing to futurity & to this imperfect mode of pressing on your favorable notice a topic so near to my heart, I doubly condemn my weak procrastination; more especially, as should you please to listen to me, fortune will for several years lead us both to a land far distant from that of our nativity:—

Honorable dealing to yourself compels this candid confession from me;—as also that altho' my present income, position in life, & future prospects are such as to fully warrant my hopes of supporting a family in respectability & easy circumstances yet a considerable number of years must be spent in a solitary land before we can attain to perfect independence of fortune & can return to civilization & those pleasures of life from which it derives so many of its charms.— Weigh this duly,—but along with it—oh allow me to add also, permit yourself to estimate the value of that heart which will not permit, tho' wrung with anguish while tracing these words, the slightest chance to arise whereby you might be drawn into a position to be afterwards repented of. Should your favorable sentiments & firmness of mind overcome these obstacles rest assured that two years hence I revisit Scotland to sue for that hand the possession of which will ever be esteemed by me the dearest object this world can award me.— I enclose this open to your father, who should he approve of my proposals will hand it to you:— May I beg the honor of a reply in return, & however you may decide, rest assured I shall ever remain,—My dear Madam

Most devotedly Yours

J. HARGRAVE

3. JAMES HARGRAVE TO LETITIA MACTAVISH

London 23^d Feby 1838

Dearest Letitia,

My open Letter, tho warm from the heart, contains not half what I would wish to say—nor as, being designed for the perusal of your parents as well as yourself, could I pour out my feelings as unreservedly as I could wish and I mean to do in this solely designed for yourself.— Little did I think when my hand last clasped yours, futurity had such trials in store for me.— And I can ill describe the state of mind with which I received the enclosed letter which postpones to such a distant day, what I had so lately stored in my mind as my chief wealth—the possession of your hand and of your society.— My word, my honor, is already pledged to you—and I glory in the pledge.— To have accepted of yours *then*, would, I still think, have been unworthy of me, as drawing you into a snare without the consent of those so dear to you and who as well deserve to be consulted: Now however should my present advances be approved, your assurances would be the day star which would guide my hopes forward to the time I have mentioned when I have secured my return to your society,—I hope never to be separated, wherever fortune may chance to lead us.

On reflecting upon my attachment to you, reason & judgment, which your conversation so lavishly exhibits, sank deep & endurable the impressions your personal charms & accomplishments first impressed on my soul.— You thought me little likely to be governed by *Mauvaise Honte*—I tell you these confessions lingered many days on my lips while in your company, & tho' struggling for utterance found none till chance & the despair of losing you finally, led to a few incoherent expressions, when time was almost no more, which I will ever bless as being the seeds from whence I trust my earthly happiness will eventually take its [illegible]*.

Believe me this subject either in words or still less in writing is a new one to me: I left Britain very young & unlike many of my friends, found little to admire in women—they of the land where I have spent [word omitted] —uneducated & uninformed.— The elevated passion of Love has been till now, a novelty to me, and tho' shy in its expression I still glory in owning myself a willing votary at its shrine.— Rash you thought me.— Ah little did you

know how beat my heart as I willingly yielded my affections an offering to love,—or how reason applauded & still applauds the offering.—

Excepting this delay—our prospects otherwise are cheering. My path in life is smooth before me & my position in it such as to afford us a certain prospect (as certain as any thing in this life can be) if not of overflowing wealth, at least of respectability and independence.—When thinking of you, & when do I not?—a thousand subjects present themselves that I could talk of were I by your side but to repeat them by this mode of conversation defies my pen.—I will hope to hear from you before I leave Britain which will not be till the 10th of March—long ere which I trust you will have received this:—Should this be otherwise, my address will be what I left with you “York F^y Hⁿ Bay House London”—

I have long wavered whether I should not have returned to Scotland pressed for your accompanying me on this occasion for which, time might have served;—but when I looked to the long Spring voyage thro’ sleet & rain for many thousand miles and to the shock of feelings at being called on to leave all in such an alternative, & at such short notice, I own I dared not risk my final hopes on such a chance.—Time will soon fly past & my faith shall be found only the purer from the trial to which it will be put.—God bless you Dearest—My warmest my purest aspirations are yours & yours only.—Ever yours most affectionately—

J. HARGRAVE

Please accept of the accompanying trifle—as a Token that in spirit you are ever present with me.—The medical Gents here, give me every encouragement regarding my health, in future.—Kind regards to my worthy friend Captⁿ Iven:—& to the young Ladies—

*Bear with me my gentle friend in my uncouth & unpolished language.

4. JAMES HARGRAVE TO LETITIA MACTAVISH

Red River 6th June 1839

Dearest Letitia—

A few hours ago I received your delightful letters of 12th Dec^r and 7th July—both of them in our Express packet from London

but the parcel you allude to which contains your so much desired portrait has not come to hand, tho' I still have a chance yet, as it may be in some cases of parcels which are in canoes not yet arrived. Finlayson did not see it in London but has some confused recollection of noticing some such for me on the voyage to New York.— Let not this however annoy you my love, for I shall at all events receive it by the ship, and I have more cheering news to tell.— My last winter proved so extremely lonely to me, and my mind was so harrassed with anxiety about your happiness that I ultimately came to the resolution of trying my strength on the bonds which confine me to this land, and to snap them in the struggle, should more gentle means not avail.— The result has been extremely favorable.— Within this hour I have settled with the Gov^r that I go home by our ship from York in the fall, and should providence protect us both the period of our probation shall be shortened by one twelve-month.— Finlayson has in this, as in all other occasions, stood my staunch friend.— His vote is mine and mine his, whenever our affairs are in question: its effect in the present instance turned the scale of perhaps my history.— You shall thank him for this as I have already done for the consolation his visit of last summer has given to your feelings.— His brother in the winter and himself next summer will have charge of York till our arrival in the fall,— which will allow us till June to enjoy together our last taste of civilization for some time.— One part of this arrangement is strictly a secret.— It is publicly understood that I return in Spring as before, but privately it will be arranged otherwise and M^r F's lady still in England will accompany us on our voyage to York Factory where he will be to receive her.— His permanent residence will be in this Colony,—almost our next door neighbor, tho 700 miles asunder.— This lady has long been sickly and tho' anxious to accompany him was considered too delicate to bear the rude voyage from Canada into the interior; so she remains with her parents in London for the present.—

I had felt somewhat annoyed at not having received a single line this spring from the Sheriff,—but on second thoughts believe that I shall still find a sheet in the missing parcel.— I wrote him on the 20th ult. by way of the States and mentioned to him my determination to get home,—but begged he would conceal such from you till this should reach you,—for fear of ultimate disappoint-

ments.— William is well, and prospering, I now send on a couple of letters from him for M^{rs} Mactavish and M^{rs} Worsley and dared not trust them by the States as my conveyance was as likely to turn out a war party as a caravan of peaceful travellers.— The same reason prevented my also writing you but I knew you would do my feelings justice should your fathers letter reach him before that this can find you.—

I feel I write gloomily altho' I have such deep cause for happiness in your affection and your preservation thro' the weary months since we parted;—how little did we think it was to be for such a time!— You will not be surprised however at my gravity, when I add that the same packet that gladdened me with your precious letters also conveyed to me the melancholy information that my poor mother was no more.— I little expected such a blow but God's will be done! My venerable father is arrived at the utmost limits of human life and his passing was also apprehended as near at hand. All these things quite unman me.— Last spring when they gave me their blessing—it was joined with one for her who was to be added to their name.— My poor mother's last words conveyed the same wish.— This subject is too painful for me to continue to dwell upon it.

I do not wonder at M^{rs} M.'s reluctance after my letters reached you the spring of my departure. Your future happiness was not only at stake but to be held in suspense for a period of which she had already experienced all the heaviness.— Few mothers could have done otherwise, and allow me to add my sweet love—that few daughters I believe are to be found who with equal firmness of mind, could have trusted with such unswerving devotion the vows of one—almost a personal stranger—unless through his own account of himself and the too flattering introductions of others.— It shall be the principal object of my life to attempt a reward for such affection.—

.....

I am glad to find that our cranberries met with such favor at Kilchrist.— I shall bring another keg home this season.— I have a few Gallons of Wild Rice for the Sheriff—and a sea otter skin has crossed the Rocky Mountains this Spring for yourself.— You speak too flatteringly of the trifles of last season.— I will write you again by way of Canada in course of the summer, but should

such not travel faster than the one of last season, I'll wager a gold ring that I shall reach you first.— With kind love to both your parents to Polly Flora & your brothers I am

Dearest Dearest Letitia

Most affectionately yours

J. H.

We are just now all in a bustle with some wandering strangers, two Col[onel]s of Her Majestys Guards who have dragged their way hither in the Govrs suite and who are determined to depopulate the plains—of Buffalo.— Two such scarecrows I could never have imagined as holding such rank.— One takes in both sides of the Horizon with his eyes—and weighs somewhat about 20 s[tone]. The other is a mere shadow—well fitted in one respect to be a soldier as an enemy might as well attempt to hit the edge of a penknife.— They are yet not out of the horrors into which they were thrown by our style of marches in Express Canoes.— To be regularly roused from bed at 1 in the morning and have to finish their nap in the canoe lulled by the song of the voyageur, with the dash of their paddles & washed by the spray, nearly washed away the little wits the gay life of London had left them.— One of them, an old Peninsular Campaigner declared that had he drilled his soldiers as severely as the Gov^r had them on the march—they would have shot him in five days.— If these are a sample of poor Victoria's Guards, she has more reason than ever to trust for her protection alone to the affection of her subjects.

I owe a scolding to Dugald for not having written me an answer to two letters of mine of last summer, but must pardon him I think as he I am told is bringing himself up in the loaded canoes to answer personally for all matters.— I understand he is designed to cross the Rocky Mountains to the Col^a the only field now for a young Gent. to distinguish himself who does not rise by the pen.— From Lat. 43° our right of Trade now extends there as well as on the east coast to the Frozen Ocean. The Russians occupy a corner of the continent about Bherrings Straits, but instead of being rivals to us depend rather upon our assistance both for provisions & merchandise to trade with the Indians.—

A new colony has lately been established by us on the north shores of the Col^a River near its mouth.— The climate is very

mild the soil excellent the finest grazing pastures extend through unmeasured distances.— This last circumstance has encouraged the formation of a joint stock Coy—connected with our present business for the exportation of wool which I have no doubt will in a few years rival that from Australia.— Your Uncle John George has taken shares to the extent of £1,000 and I have been tempted to follow for as much in the same beau chemin. But what care you about stocks & shares!—a pretty subject indeed for a letter to you from me!— Willie winters again at YF— His assistance has been of the greatest value to me, and in my absence he will be the principal conductor of the Depot and the only one there who is capable of performing its Duties.— I fully expect that we will be able to keep him with us after our return, in which case you will only have to leave one part of your family to join another.— I fondly trust you have recovered from the severe cold which you mention:— I call myself in good health, yet the effects of that horrible York sickness [have] not yet quite left me.— I am however considerably stouter, and on the whole improved within the last year.— My voyage hither from York was unusually heavy and disagreeable owing to a thaw in Feby a month when mercury even usually freezes. The whole distance was got over in 19 days, travelling about 40 miles a day.— Fresh relays of men & dogs were obtained at the end of each 150 miles, and the whole was completed without the slightest accident.— I will leave this for YF from the 12 to the 15th and my successor will join me there in course of next month.— Depend on hearing from me on my very first approach to the shores of Britain .—

P.S.— A few minutes after closing this letter I was called to assist in giving audience to the principal Indian Chief in this quarter with about 100 of his followers.— On such occasions a good deal of form and ceremony is observed— Speeches are made, Interpreters intervene tho each party may and often do understand the other, and the audience closes with presents of Clothing, Tobacco, Gunpowder & Ball.— The use of liquor is entirely prohibited among all our Indians, but the chief burden of the harangue for all that was a repetition of their earnest request for the beloved Kootie Wábñai—or fire water,—a petition as hopeless as those of our radicals will be when Tories come into power.— The

principal speaker on this occasion was a venerable Indian upwards of 90 years old, tall gaunt and emaciated.— Naked from the loins upwards, his long floating hair as white as snow and bearing on his head the valued emblems of the number of scalps he had carried off during his long life—(upwards of 15 I believe)—he stood leaning on a staff and poured out his oration with a fire and energy quite astonishing but which sounded from his [illegible] & attenuated chest hollow unearthlike.— The attentions of his younger followers to him was most tender and careful.— Two assisted him to rise, watched on each side of him all his speech lest his strength had failed him and when he had finished carefully replaced him on his seat.— The whole party shone with paint & vermillion, Furs, feathers & scarlet cloth, and left the room on their departure redolent of Tobacco smoke and Sturgeon oil.— There is a sketch of your new subjects for you!—to complete which know that when they may chance to see you, you will be regarded as of a superior order of beings throughout the kingdom of York—more than equal to twice the size of Great Britain.—

5. JAMES HARGRAVE TO LETITIA MACTAVISH

Y F 16th July 1839

My Sweet Letitia—

The Express for England via Canada is in process of being made up and when all pens are busy with the dry pages of business mine seeks apart from the crowd a subject infinitely more delightful to my feelings.— In my last from Red River of the 6th of June I mentioned that your portrait had not come to hand:— I now have the happiness to say that it reached me by the loaded Canoes at Norway House—while on my return to this place,—and I need not add how it was welcomed,—or what caresses have been bestowed on it as your proxy.— It is evidently of high merit as a painting but wants the sweet and animated charm that dwells only with the original.— William says it has an expression of sadness:— I do not trace this, altho' I peruse it more frequently & closely than any page in my possession.— It however tells me to shorten my absence as much as I have the power of doing;—and its persuasive eloquence shall be a law to me.— I mark the token which encircles the lovely neck & when I see you next will replace it by another still more worthy of it.—

You made me tremble for your safety when I read the narrow escape you had from fever while in Edin^h.— For my sake dearest, let me implore you to preserve yourself from a similar risk again. You do not know how distressed I have been. My heart has lately been much wrung by the loss of one nearest to me, judge what a second, still more touching to my feelings would weigh me down.

Dugald with his party of young recruits reached this place on the 1st Inst. a few days after me and started on the 8th for the shores of the Pacific in company with the officer in charge of the west side of the Mountains.— He will be entrusted with the general accounts of that quarter of the Trade—a situation of responsibility & confidential trust—one which he is in every way competent to fill.— Willie was rejoiced to meet him & no less sorry to part.— It is however expected that he will visit this again a year or two hence.— He looked thinner than usual, owing to the roughness of the Spring voyage but full of health and spirits.— [illegible].

Never did I pray for the safe arrival of our ship as now when I look forward to the next expected packet and to the time when I shall slip on board to return to you. I need not say that few hours will be needlessly spent here after that the Prince Rupert has reached our Roads.— The present packet is sent off at least 10 days earlier this season—the second reason that you may receive this so much earlier than last year;—although by this I ensure the loss of the wager I pledged—such loss however shall always be esteemed my most cherished gain.—

When writing you last I alluded to my voyage upwards last spring, but dwelt little I believe on the incidents attending it.— I kept however a few rough notes during the journey and when I am at length by your side they shall serve as hints toward a more detailed narrative of Indian adventure should such prove musical in your ears. I mentioned that our remaining scraps of white mens politeness were wofully taxed to do honor to two stray Cols of her majestys Guards. They had then left us under an escort of 30 to 40 armed & mounted Brulés to make war on the poor in-offensive Buffalo which are to be found a few days march from that Colony.— Little was certainly expected from them but still less did we hope to learn (as I the other day have done) that both these Gallant Colonels were fairly put to flight by a few old curly

headed bulls and that men of war—though they be—they literally returned without drawing blood. I regret all this—for the sake of our country:—because these were the first specimens of a british militiaire that most of our Natives have seen—and neither in person, equipage or acts have they served to increase or win support [for] the idea formed here of the appearance or prowess of a British Soldier.—

In order that this may reach you as soon as possible I send it to a friend in Canada who will put it into the safest & most expeditious channel for crossing the Atlantic. [illegible] I may be detained some time—a week or two not more—in London should the Gov^r not have arrived from Canada before me, but will write you the first moment I touch land. Should this reach you first favor me to my address at the House with a sheet as to your prosperity.— I will likely come by Railway & the Mail Train to Edin^h & from thence thro Glasgow to you. . . .

While I write the sun looks in on me with one of the pleasantest smiles it ever wears in this dismal climate.— The sky is azure & cloudless, in the open air the Thermo. stands at 87°—& every person animal & object feels the genial influence.— Unfortunately these are angel births here, transient & strange. Before evening such is the mutability of the Climate, a change of wind to seaward, may sink the Thermo to 40° & wrap the gloomy pine forests around us in chilly fog—or drenching rain.— Till the middle of August such is only too well, a description of our climate.— For a month and a half afterwards, the weather is usually more settled; and the clouds of Mouschettos having been laid by the increasing sharpness of the air, we enjoy more of the genial influences of the open air than in any other portion of the year.— Winter sets in—in October with rain sleet hail & snow—Nov^r is gloom personified;— but over the holidays, the open water being all frozen over & the hoar frost in consequence diminished—we enjoy many days even more pleasant than the summer.— The weather then is generally calm with light snows—and altho' so cold as during the nights to freeze mercury—in the day wrapped up [illegible] proper to the climate, we take long excursions out of doors either on snow Shoes or dashing along in a Cariole as fast as 4 dogs can carry us.— Altho at this time the weather is so warm, the [ice] full 6 feet thick which covered the whole Bay through the winter is still in sight northward

off the mouth of this River, & two Schooners which I despatched 3 days ago to Churchill on the coast northward from this—are this morning only attempting to leave the mouth of the River about 6 miles to the North East to try & find a passage along between the ice and the shore.— I have been led into this long harangue unawares but I do not regret it— Familiarize your mind to it Sweetest and altho society be none, and the adventitious helps which civilization furnishes for consuming time be unknown— our mutual affection shall supply all deficiencies during the time our fortunes may render a residence here necessary to us.

J H

6. JAMES HARGRAVE TO JOHN LEE LEWES

York Factory, 1 June 1841

My Dear Sir

We have had one of the awkwardest springs here this season experienced by any now upon this Coast. Till the 8th of May the Thermo had only risen to merely above freezing point & thus produced not the slightest effect upon the body of snow that covered the country. In one week from that date all was converted under a Temperature of 75° to a sheet of water and on the 18th Ult to the ice on our river gave way carrying up the green and frost ice in the same style as the R.R. floods of 1826. I dreaded an inundation and had the whole of the lower stores in the Factory emptied into the second flat, or the goods placed in those and the Magazine on scaffolds, but altho' the water reached very near our level it happily remained below it. The Decked Craft on the creek at Point of Marsh and in Sloops Creek, were greatly exposed and we were very nearly losing them. The one nearest us we contrived to shelter from the torrent of crashing ice, but that at Point of Marsh—altho' she escaped the first burst, was as the water rose in the shallow eddy where she lay, soon surrounded by an extensive floe. This remained quiet till the river rose so high as to float her, and then the whole drifted off toward 5 Fathom hole—snapped her 5 in. chain cables as if they had been twine, and carried her off in the midst of it.

For five days at the imminent hazard of our lives we struggled among drifting ice to reach her with boats & eventually gave these

up in despair as she was carried over the outer bar in the centre of floes several miles across. That same night the wind providentially shifted to the North East blowing a gale with sleet and hail, and so soon as daylight allowed us what should we see but the lost schooner blown back to us & laying aground near to the Beacon at Point of Marsh. On this occasion we succeeded in penetrating through the ice and hauling her off. We brought her in triumph again into the River without so much as a spar injured, and her hull as sound and tight as a bottle!!! Have not I reason to be thankful for such an interposition of Providence! We should certainly have felt her want this fall when we expect two ships to this port.

In my own private affairs I am as happy as man can be. My wife in course of the Spring presented me with a fine stout boy, and both mother and child continue to flourish exceedingly. We are spending our days very happily amid these swamps as we both have a turn for the amusements of literature; and altho' pleasures out of doors are few, we only feel a greater relish for those around our own fireside.

I hope to hear from you in the fall and to have an answer to this by the Winter Express. Remember me most warmly to my kind and gentle friends Mrs. and Miss Lewes, and in hopes that both you and they may soon be placed in a position possessing a greater variety of enjoyments, I remain, My Dear Lewes,

Most sincerely and truly yours

J H

7. JAMES HARGRAVE TO DUGALD MACTAVISH, SENIOR

York Factory 8th Sept^r 1841

My Dear Sir

It was with extreme pleasure that I welcomed the receipt of all your kind letters of the 24th Feb^y & the 10th & 12 June,—and you may well believe it was a happy day to us when Letitia & I heard that all was well at Kilchrist.— Your most excellent herrings have also arrived in the best preservation.— I have had a few of them by stealth—that is, in our own family, but I do not purpose to make them public till winter when I am surrounded by my own Mess only—& when we can enjoy our good things at our own good service.— In short I feel myself a miser in the use of them—

a feeling I believe I never felt before in regard to my eatables.— The meal I have not yet tasted tho' I still am determined to have my share—but Letitia finds it so much superior to what we import for the public use, that she has laid violent hands on it & locked it up for our little Boys sole & exclusive benefit.— By the way this is but an Irish mode of mine to introduce our young son to his Grand papa—but it matters not—you must have heard or expected some such news long before this can reach you.— My dear wife was delivered of him in the beginning of April and altho delicate for some time she has long ago been restored to even better health than she had ever enjoyed in this land before. She has ever been happy & contented with her lot and this sweet addition to our society renders our domestic felicity complete. She will however give you all details on this subject which is too apt to engross my pen when writing to a friend, but the pressure of business upon it just now compels me to turn to other subjects.—

My friend William is still here—and having been appointed General Accountant for the Northern Department of the country—(that is, all the continent north of Lake Superior) is second in Command of the Factory.— His charge is a heavy one and his application unbounded. I have no anxiety about him filling the office with high credit—but I sometimes tell him to take care of his health—for I have felt the effects myself of heavy mental & bodily labor united. He bears up well however & the summer campaign is now almost over. Dugald did not come out this season but was flourishing in April last at Fort Vancouver.— We heard from him at that time, when all went well with him.— I am happy to hear that Hector continues steady at his Agricultural studies. When Sir George returns again to Britain I have no doubt he will receive an appointment.

I rejoice to learn that the Gov^t has considered so favorably the application made in favor of the resident Sheriffs of Scotland. I felt the justice of the claim and would have foresworn the Whigs could they have been so much akin to the nether millstone as to have treated it with indifference.— I truly congratulate you on the acquisition.— I have also to thank you for your files of the Witness & Argus.— They are laid aside for winter delectation—when both shall be bro^t under review and the one shall be an antidote to the bane of the other.—

I have written M^r Loudoun & again enclosed him a Bill & a list of Books.— In addition to these I have a great wish to acquire a copy of Napiers Peninsular War—now completed—but the price is such a ransom that I demur.— My Letitia suggests that perhaps her friend Dan: Beaton of Edin: would take the trouble should you [illegible] request him to try & pick up a good second hand copy for me from some Library at about $\frac{1}{2}$ first cost.— The copy I want is the 8^{vo} one with engraved plates of the military movements. M^r L: has the wherewithal to meet his bill and it can be packed with some I am getting from Ogle of Glasgow.—

I am very overpowered with labor just now & must refer you to Letitia for all family details.— She is writing both you & Mama at great length—so I shall only add further that with our love to Mama & to all the family—I ever am, My Dear Sir

Most affectionately Yours

J H

You will receive again this season a cask containing 50 of our best Buffalo Tongues—they are better cured this year than they were the last & I think will be found choice ones.— Your acceptance of these trifles I assure you gratifies me much—for they are I know great favorites with you—& are almost the only thing that we have worthy of sending to you. I had purposed adding a jar of preserved cranberries—but the spring was a backward one and they are still quite green & unfit for use.—

8. FORM OF MARRIAGE CONTRACT ISSUED BY OFFICERS OF THE HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY IN CHARGE OF FORTS. FROM THE FRAMED ORIGINAL HANGING IN HUDSON'S BAY HOUSE, WINNIPEG, MANITOBA.

Marriage Contract

I, George Rose, Native Indian of the Albany District but now of Ruperts House Hudsons Bay, personally appearing before Robt. Miles—Chief Trader at Ruperts House, do hereby form a Marriage Contract and expressly agree to take unto myself as my Lawful wife, by the same Laws as if I had been legally married by a Clergyman of the Church of England, Sally, daughter of Com-mutchaupai deceased, (now a widow having survived her two

former husbands Eshcocaupé & Coapaun), whom by these presents I hereby declare and acknowledge in every respect, from the date herein expressed, to be my legal and lawful married Wife, as if I had passed through the Ceremony of the Church—and hereafter bind and oblige myself to support her so long as the Almighty may be pleased to sustain me in life.

	Sworn & Signed by my mark not being able to write in presence of the subscribing Witnesses at Ruperts House Ruperts River District, Hudsons Bay, Ruperts Land, this twenty sixth day of February year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty two.
Seals of	
Robert S. Miles	

George Rose— + his mark
Sally — + her mark

Jacob Corrigan	Witness	Ruperts House,
William Conston	Witness	Feb. 26th, 1842.
	His	Sworn and attested before
Peter Moar	Peter + Moar	me this date
	Mark	
Witness to the Mark of	Robt. Miles	Robt. Miles—Chief Trader
P. Moar	Robt. Miles	Hudson's Bay Coy Service

9. JAMES HARGRAVE TO DUGALD MACTAVISH, SENIOR

York Factory 22nd August 1845.—

My Dear Sir

Your kind letter of 10th of June, together with their welcome accompaniments, reached us on the 11th of this month; and as our Ship is being laden with her homeward Cargo I hasten to address you a few lines in reply.— My friend William arrived here on the 29th June with the Montreal canoes, and we were most happy to find that his tour to Britain had improved his health so much.— The few words you say to me regarding him are very pleasing to my feelings, for they tell me that the reports which I had given to you of him have not been found exaggerated.— He is truly a manly honorable and gentlemanly young fellow:— As such he is now widely appreciated in this service,—and as a proof of it—I

will mention to you in confidence that I have every reason to believe he will receive his commission next Spring.—

Dugald was also here this summer,—the Agent of our affairs,—west of the Mountains.— He is even more universally beloved than William from his highly popular manner—joined to the same honorable frank spirit.— He has this season been appointed by Council to the command of a new Factory now building on the South end of Vancouver Island—named Fort Victoria.— That place is destined to be our head quarters on the shores of the Pacific,—Fort Vancouver being badly situated in several points of view.— He will not have his commission along with William—as his labors have not been so heavy nor his situation so prominent; but this must immediately follow,—and I have not the slightest doubt, after impartially comparing them in my mind with the other rising gentlemen in the service,—that I will yet see the two brothers the most influential leading officers at the head of the British Fur Traders in the northern portion of the Continent.— Their talents—their principles—their name, for it is widely known and honored in this land,—are all guarantees for what I foretell of them.—

I should be apt to listen to what you say about sending home our little boy, as it begins to accord with my own wishes;—but I will still have to defer it for some time.— My rotation for furlough comes round next year, when I have a right to visit Britain:—but again, there is a bye-law of the Service that controls this, by preventing any from leave of absence or even furlough oftener than once in seven years without the special leave of Council.— Next year I shall only have been six years in the country since last home; and in writing Sir George this spring on the subject he answers me by an invitation to attend Council at Red River Settlement in next June when an arrangement regarding my future Station in the Service will be settled between us.— William is to have the whole charge of the Factory and District during my absence, which will be from March till July;—and I have thus less anxiety about leaving my dear wife and our little ones for such a length of time.— My private plans are to get William into my situation when I leave this place, for which he is in every way well qualified;—and after spending a winter in Scotland and getting our little boy properly placed for his education,—to procure for myself a Station in the Service within—

or in the vicinity of—the civilized world in Canada.— I think that I may accomplish all this—but I am not certain. I shall however write to you from Red River as to my final success.—

I am very grieved to read that which you tell me about the infirm state of your limbs.— Your late sickness however was not to be got rid of in a short time; and I still hope that time and skill will do much for you.— As I hear that you now make much use of a carriage for your journeys in to and out of town, I have this year sent you home a Box containing a fur wrapper for the limbs while so travelling.— Apart from its warmth and comfort, it is,— of its kind,—one of the greatest curiosities in Britain; being made of the skins of the Musk-Ox—an animal almost unknown, and only obtained by us from the Northern Esquimaux within the Arctic Circle through the hands of which tribe these skins come till they reach our trading Establishment at Churchill.— Very few are obtained even there, and are never sent home for sale:— indeed the only other specimens I have heard of being in Britain— are in the London British and Edinburgh Museums.— Regarding this I have only one request to make—which is—that *you keep it to yourself—and make use of it*. I regret that I have not been able this season to procure a few Buffalo Tongues for you—but send you as a specimen of our *Mess comforts* a 4 Gall. jar of preserved Cranberries.— They are great favorites with most of us and especially with Master Joseph James:—they may perhaps prove a rarity to you.—

This summer has been a very sickly one on this Coast,— influenza having laid up the greater number of our servants during the very busiest part of the season. William and all my family entirely escaped the infection;—and altho I had a sufficient experience of it myself—the absolute necessity of keeping on my legs to prevent a general derangement of business—bore me through in the course of a few days. It has now entirely disappeared, and the mortality has been very small.— As Letitia will be writing you about all our domestic matters I shall only refer to her letters for them:—and with our united love to Grand mama to yourself and all around your fireside

I am

My Dear Sir

Affectionately yours

J. HARGRAVE

10. JAMES HARGRAVE TO DONALD ROSS

*Private**Tavistock Hotel**London 5th April 1847*

My Dear Ross

Amid the crush of this great city and in one of its most crowded locations—here I am sat down to address you a few lines for “Auld Lang Syne”—few they must be—for in addition to the distraction attending such a bustle—my time is much occupied both at the House & with the Gov^r:— We reached England last fall safely in Oct^r (the 18th I think,) and after spending about 3 months in Edin^h have been for the remainder of the season at Kilchrist Ho. I am most happy to say that my wife is quite recovered of the ailment which caused us to visit England this season and will be out with me next Autumn to our old quarters at YF. Master Joseph remains as a Boarder in the Madras College of S^t Andrews—one of the best Seminaries for children which our country contains.— I am almost quite restored to my former strength except that the weakness of my ankles has not yet passed away.— In other respects I never was better.— Mary [Clarke] and our little girl will return with us.— I do not intend coming up here again this Spring but will proceed by Steamer from Edinburgh to Orkney about the beginning of June to join the Ship.—

The tidings I have to communicate regarding our own affairs are far from being of a cheering character.— Furs have suffered a depression I think, or are sold at about $\frac{1}{3}d$ from the prices of last year—and our late valuable staple—Beaver—is literally a drug in the market.— The whole of last Shipment is still on hand—amounting to about 65,000 Skins (exclusive of the Columbia) the highest price offered for it—being [illegible]—what measures are to be taken to remedy this most distressing change in our affairs—I am of course quite ignorant—for at the House—nothing is to be gathered of what is passing in our own Concerns—either in England or as regards the intended measures for ensuing season in the North. The names of the successful candidates for promotion this season are even unknown to us so far and our ears are *idly open* for intelligence.— The Gov^r has been residing here since his arrival & with us are Mess^{rs} Angus Cameron & J. McMillan—who have come up from Scotland to remain here while we are in town. M^r

Peter M^cKenzie is also in town & will be going out by way of Canada I believe.— Both the Keiths & M^r Charles are quite well.— They are all residing together in Aberdeen.— Haldane is also well—but is a Martyr to rheumatism.— He is snugly settled at Haddington—where I spent a few pleasant days with him.

You will ere this have heard of the awfully sudden death of poor Evans last winter in Yorkshire.— I understand that he is looked upon by the Wesleyan Connection as the victim of a conspiracy to destroy his character—but whether this has been attributed to our Concern or to his own brethern I am quite ignorant.— Truly—in the minds of all who are conversant with details—both are held to be alike innocent.— I have not had an opportunity of meeting with the relatives of Mr. Mason this winter.— Please present my best regards to him accompanied with my Kindest Wishes— It is *impossible* to me to write to all my friends from this place—but their kind recollections [illegible] are present to my memory.— Will you have the goodness to say so much to all those who pass you—for I am smothered with work—and I believe can address none besides yourself—Christie & Mactavish.— My best and warmest regards attend my friend M^{rs} Ross—and the young Ladies and all those who are around your fireside.— I will be out to a certainty by the Ship—and we shall yet I trust have many a merry squeeze together!—

With sincerest regards believe me

My Dear Friend

Most faithfully yours

J. HARGRAVE.

11. JAMES HARGRAVE TO DUGALD MACTAVISH, SENIOR

York Factory 9th Sept^r 1847.

My Dear Sir

I am sure you will be delighted to learn that my family and I arrived here in safety on the 25th Ult^o after a very tedious voyage of about nine weeks from Stromness during four of which we were detained among the ice in Hudsons Straits.— Altho the month of August is the height of the *warm season* in such high latitudes— (about 62°) we had hard frost every night, with heavy showers of snow which sometimes covered our decks to the depth of six

inches.— I never witnessed a more desolate or discouraging scene.— Ice grinding together and crashing around us as the masses were moved by the tides,—the sky so obscured that for days we could not see a mile around us;—and to render our condition hopeless for the time,—the wind for above two weeks *obstinately* continued to blow in our teeth—however it might shift—it never by any chance shifted to a fair point.— My Letitia bore all with the greatest firmness and fortitude:—not a murmur nor complaint escaped her;—but I assure you it was with unfeigned delight we at length found ourselves once more in our comfortable quarters at this place.— Letitia is quite restored from her original cause of visiting Britain and her general health at this time is excellent.—

William came on board of us, so soon as we reached the Coast: he still appears thin but his general health is good.— He was appointed by Council to Red River Settlement this winter,—but that arrangement has been changed since I landed and he remains with us.— Dugald, some time ago, returned from California to the Columbia after having arranged our affairs at the former place in a very satisfactory manner.— He has since been sent to the Sandwich Islands and such is the high estimation he is in with Council—I understand the management of our affairs at those Islands will be placed in his hands and the previous Agent withdrawn or under his control.

Before this can reach you our little “Doi Dame” will of course be off to St. Andrews.— His mother misses his company much—for he was, as it were, the apple of her eye. Little *Tash* is flourishing apace and is taking his place at Mamas table where she says “poor Doch” will be with her again—“very soon”.—

You will be interested to learn that our Discovery Expedition under Dr. Rae arrived here *all* well two days ago—having completed the entire survey of the North east Corner of this Continent from the straits of the Fury & Hecla to the most eastern point of Capt. Sir John Ross’s discoveries.— D^r Rae goes home in the Prince Rupert and you will of course soon have the whole details in the public Prints.—

You will receive, a week or two after this reaches you, a cask of our Buffalo Tongues which I hope will be found a little better than the last ones which were certainly of very inferior quality.— I was anxious to obtain a pair of fur gloves—but such is the short

time the Ships will remain in the Roads, that I cannot get a pair made before they sail.— I shall not however overlook this matter in course of this winter.— I am very much oppressed with labor just now; our late arrival, and the great number of people from the interior who have come down for goods out of the cargoes now about landing—engross my time so completely that in my private letters I cannot say all I could wish.— I must therefore refer you to Letitia for further details who is just now busily occupied with a letter for Grand-Mama, and with kind love to all your family—I ever am

My Dear Papa

Your most Affectionate

J. HARGRAVE

12. JAMES HARGRAVE TO J. J. HARGRAVE

York Factory 1 Dec' 1848

My Dear Boy—

As I will tomorrow send letters to England by way of Canada I must not forget a little one for you which will be enclosed in another to Aunt Florence and she will get it sent to you at St. Andrews. I am sure you will be happy to hear that Dear Mama and I with little Tash and little Mary Jane are all well at this place. We often speak about you and received all the letters that Mr. Young & Mr. Potts wrote me about you & we are very happy only poor Mama is sometimes wearying to hear from you & hopes that you are well.— We were glad to hear that you were fond of your books that you were good humoured and gentle with your little play-mates—and also that you were invited to visit our friends Capt. Broughton & Col. Playfair. This is gratifying to us and you will say to Miss Playfair that Mama & Papa are very much obliged to her for her kindness to you. The little letter that Miss Playfair wrote for you to us last year came to us by the ship and caused us very much pleasure.—

Tash is now as tall as you were when you left York Factory. She often makes gardens in the ground before her nursery—but she cannot plant pease as well as you. She had your window boxes to plant them in—but almost every day she dug them up again to see whether they were growing. Young Rose has had

pups and she often has them in the nursery to play with them.— Two of them are fine large ones & Tash wishes to have them harnessed to your little carriage which she likes to ride in. Mary Clarke and Betsy the Indian girl are with her in the nursery.— Old Cookam [Cucum] is also quite well & is here every Saturday to help Mary wash the floors. She brings us plenty of fine white fish from Trout Creek & old Mother Morris also brings us very fine Trout from Ten Shilling Creek where we used to go to catch fish & then get them cooked on a fire by the side of the stream.— We have a fine garden here now—& every fall we get plenty of large Turnips out of it of which Tash is very fond.—

The winter is now very cold & the ground has been covered with snow for nearly six weeks.— The partridges & rabbits have all become white & the Indian boys bring us in plenty of them every Saturday.— One of them brought me a fine white owl—very large & quite clean— I intend sending it home if I can get it properly stuffed, to my friend Mr. Potts in Edinburgh. Do you remember the one I had in the Summer House which you used to come so often to see and the little one in the small enclosure near the nursery—what long claws it had—& how it used to snap its bill at you when it was angry?—

Mama & little Mary Jane sometimes take a ride in her Dog Cariole wrapped up in large Musk ox Robes—with beaver caps & gloves lined with Ermine.— Little Tash too sometimes goes instead of Mary Jane—and then they take a long ride—out behind the Factory to Nelson River or down to the Point of Marsh.—

I hope to hear from you in the month of April next,—& expect to hear that your Mr. Young is pleased both with your conduct & attention to your studies.— Mama & little Tash join me in kind love to you, while I am ever

My dear Boy

Your most affectionate papa

J H

13. JAMES HARGRAVE TO DONALD ROSS

Private

York Factory 10^h Nov^r 1850

My Dear Ross

Winter with its quiet days has at length come round to us

again;—as usual, they find me at the desk—ear deep in papers;—and, as usual, I amuse the tedium, from time to time, by covering a private sheet for a friend with the notions that float through the brain—while the pen is busy among Invoices and Statements.—I need not touch at any length upon the sayings and doings of last autumn;—for I guess, that, before all the Brigades got past you, *last Autumn*,—you had a pretty shrewd notion we had not been idle here through the month of August.— Suffice it therefore to say that all was got through in regular order and that while the Interior was provided for 1850—and the Northern District most amply so for 1851, we have this Depot again very fairly provided with the means of meeting all reasonable applications.— Some difficulties no doubt still exist principally occasioned by the assumption at home that *all* the goods received in 1849 for Red River into this Depot had been transferred over to it;—and, in consequence, a like quantity had been cut out of my Indents, while the Secretary last spring assured me that “all the Goods lost in the Graham” as well as the regular shipment for 1850—should be sent out to us last fall—without fail.— This unforeseen curtailment has made large holes in some of the more important items—*tea* for instance;—but notwithstanding this sort of play at “cross purposes”—I feel confident that there will be no scarcity here next season in any thing essential to the Trade or for Sale.—

The Outcry of the Country—*louder than there was any occasion for*,—having thus filled our Stores again;— it becomes the duty of every one, who looks for something else for these goods besides the pleasure of *giving them away*—to take into serious consideration the other side of the account.— Wages have been increased, fur Tariffs diminished—expenses of all kinds on the rise—while the Returns have fallen off to a figure, unexampled in its diminutiveness, within my knowledge of the Trade.— *Every where*, the Acc^{ts} Curr^t of the Districts show a serious falling off, while the results of the Trade in some of them it is actually painful to look upon.— Let the same zeal be directed towards the economical & profitable disposal of goods that has been shown in getting hold of them—and *then* I shall think that the Trade is worth the labor bestowed upon it;— otherwise, I for one—will feel—that we are acting somewhat on the principle of “sowing the wind to reap the whirlwind.”—

You of course have heard of my removal from this place next

year, and no doubt are wondering how I have never come to have mentioned my hopes of this to such an old friend as yourself.— My simple answer to this is—that my lips were sealed on the subject. Till last spring I had no certainty on the matter, and the intelligence fell upon me with nearly the same surprise that it must have done on yourself.— Had our affairs here been in their usual Train I would at this moment have been far enough from York; but I could not think of having it said that I threw up my charge in a state of confusion; and this led me to suggest to Sir George that I should be left here to see the business of this season closed.— This proposition was approved of—and my present orders are to proceed to Norway Ho—next spring at the opening of the Navigation to proceed to the Sault by such conveyance as may be found for me;—and thus, unless all promises are *wind*, you may rest assured of seeing me in next June.— My family resides here till the autumn when they go home by the ship, spend the winter of 1851/2 in Scotland, and in the summer of 1852 will sail from the Clyde in one of our splendid Glasgow steamers for New York, from whence they will reach me by way of Albany and the Canada Lakes.— These are my present plans, built upon the Gov^{rs} arrangements of last spring;—and should Providence permit their execution I look forward to a few happy years at the *first* of my “Wintering Grounds” before I finally retire from the service.— The climate is a paradise compared with these dismal swamps now around us;—money *can* there obtain for my family something better than the *Salt Geese* they are at *this* day living on,—and we will be again within the verge of civilization and enabled to hear from such of our children as are in Scotland—as often as we may wish.— It *may* be—that some—*not* of my friends—may talk of *favoritism*—should such good fortune at length be mine:—to such—I can only reply— Let the most incapable of them spend nearly a quarter of a century here—and go through even a quarter of the toils which I have endured within that time—and *I* shall be the *first* to vote that my anticipated Wintering Ground shall be his.—

The arrival of Mactavish last August was in every way most fortunate.— His aid was of the greatest importance to me amidst the crush of ship time—and in course of the winter I then can put into his hands and bring under his notice—the business of the Depot in all its details.— With these, his acquaintance is indeed as

extended as my own;—and, apart from any feelings arising out of our connection,—I do not think that the Gov^r could have made a better selection of one to succeed me—from among the Generation that are to follow us as the senior officers of the service.

We are all spending a very pleasant & happy winter together,—much pressed indeed for grub—our mess being very large;—and of late years the usual supply of venison & Partridges has entirely failed us.— The want of our R.R. comforts in the way of Mutton this season is therefore a *great* want amidst the general failure of other means of existence.— To you *alone* do we owe thanks this season for having thought of us in our necessity—and scarcely a day passes without hearing your name mentioned with graceful additions by both young and old.— I will not soon forget, my dear friend! your kind—most kind attention in the way of vegetables.—

I suppose you have not yet seen McLean's volumes regarding men and things in the North.— A friend sent me a copy by the ship—and I accordingly forward them to you for perusal.— Please show them to *none else*, (the nature of their contents will explain the reason why,) and return them to me by the spring Packet.— Tom Parson, poor fellow! had heard of them & bluntly asked of me whether I had a copy.— The answer led to a pressing request for a perusal—which he obtained after much importuning.— The narrative of the "Evans persecution" I am sure deprived him, at least, of *one* nights rest.— Tell me—my friend!—whether any thing has occurred since those times which has led you to entertain doubts as to whether that unfortunate man Evans could by *any possibility* have been guiltless of the frailties with which he was charged by his followers.—

No news of any importance reached us by the ship except a rumour of the death of poor Sir Robert Peel, who was said to have been killed by an accidental fall from his horse.— The Captain of the George who reached us on the 24 August said—that, after sailing from the Thames in the end of June—he found it necessary to put into an English port early in July—and that while there an Express arrived from Town with this most unfortunate intelligence.— No newspaper or any other proof reached us—and as the skipper was only a drunken body—whom we *never* saw in a sober state while here—I have hopes that his muddled brain has exaggerated some flying rumour.— You may however have some

confirmation—(if there be any truth in the matter) from the story through Red River by the first Winter Packet.—

By the way—have you a copy of poor Tom Simpsons *second* volume—containing his letters &c published by his brother?— If so, please let me have a sight of it by the return of the Packet—and you shall have it again in spring.— I only got a glance at a few pages of it while at R.R. in 1846—and would like a perusal of the whole.— Sir George has been most unfortunate in the notices made of him in the public press—and these libels on his conduct are most unjust.— Wealth, distinction and fame are dearly purchased at such a price!—

I have hitherto been so busied winding up and putting into regular shape the business of last autumn that I have not begun my winter reading as yet.— My chief import of last fall in that way was a copy of Alisons History of Europe during the French Revolutionary War in 20 handsome volumes of *solid* contents.— It is a standard Work of growing fame—and altho' a little too *Tory* for me in its politics—it is a splendid work—manly in its sentiments and independent of all parties in judging of men and their actions.— Have you heard any thing further about Macaulay and his History?— I have only seen the two first volumes, and am “hungry as a Hawk” for their successor.—

All goes well with us within our own gates. The Gude wife is quite restored to her wonted health & strength—and Master “Dugald John” is decidedly the “flower of the flock”.— The prospect of so soon escaping from this land of fogs and snow adds wonderfully to our spirits, and however or whatever may be my fortunes next year—my family *at all events* goes home—the education of my elder children rendering it impossible for them to remain longer here.— Thus is a yarn spun for you out of the first thoughts in the first words.— Answer me in kind—& with our united & sincere regards to you & yours believe me—Dear Ross

I am faithfully yours

J. HARGRAVE

Please let what I have said to you about family matters & all my views & schemes be a matter of *strict confidence* between you & me for the winter

JH

14. J. J. HARGRAVE TO JAMES HARGRAVE

*10 Bell Street St Andrew's
October 21, 1851*

My dear Papa,

As Mamma is writing I take this opportunity of writing you a few lines to tell you that I got your letter before I went to London. Mamma has only one very old pen in the house but we shall purchase some more tomorrow. When we do not buy a box they are $\frac{1}{2}$ pennies each. I arrived about 6 o'clock in the morning and went immediately to Finsbury Square and I was shown to Mamma's room and she was in bed with Mary Jane. I took her for Tash and I was wondering how she was so little and I met Mary [Clarke] upon the stair and she took me down to the parlour to see Dougald John. Both of them are very pretty. Tash tells me to tell you that we are to get some muscles on Saturday with some other shell fish [and] that we are all quite well. I thought that the Exhibition was larger than it really is, but still it is a most wonderful sight. I could not see it half. I went to it on the 10th of this month. The large bell rung at 5 o'clock for us to go out and shook the transept. It covers 18 acres of ground, I believe that it is 65 feet high, proposed by Prince designed by Joseph Paxton. I am now in a new book in M^r Young's in the next higher class to what I was before. The book is called the sessional school collection. I am just at tea at Mamma's here now. I got my likeness taken when I was in London and went home and went to Moses and Sons Tailors and came home after having got a new suit of clothes and Captain Herd called upon us with Doctor Beddam from York Factory who came home with Captain Herd. I was looking at your picture of the house at the Sault I think it is all most beautifully planned. I got 3 medals of the exhibition 2 sold out of the building and one in it. I saw the Queen that day I was going to London. She was going to Manchester. I saw her in Edinburgh. The day before when she came to Edinburgh the axle of the carriage next to hers took fire and the train was nearly off the line and one of the pipes in her engine burst. And now my dear papa I remain ever with kindest regards

Your most affectionate son

JOSEPH JAMES HARGRAVE

Tash tells me to give you her kindest regards and that Aunt Flora Grandpapa and Grandmamma are all well although I suspect she knows nothing at all about them and that she today got a short note from Her Aunt Flora with a net from her and that she was very happy to see me when I came to London and I was the same to see her. That she is not just now at school by having a cold and Mamma wishes first to have her cold better. I was very glad to see Mamma when I arrived in London, I arrived an hour and a half after the time by Bradshaw. I must now conclude.

Your affectionate son

JOSEPH JAMES HARGRAVE

15. JAMES HARGRAVE TO DONALD ROSS

Private

Sault S^{te} Marie 10th Dec^r 1851.—

My Dear Ross

As we expect the Winter Packet from below by our next Mail I have seized hold of this puny sheet to give you a few lines by it per advance;—for so soon as Sir Georges packet comes to hand—the sentence of Friar Bacon Head goes forth—that—“Time shall be no more!”— I duly received your kind note by the fall canoe and was glad to find that your health, if not quite restored, was then at least not worse than when we parted.— I trust that a winters repose in the Settlement will go far to place you in working trim for the ensuing years campaign.—

On the 26th August (the day you wrote me) I reached this place after a *roughish* voyage of some forty days from YF—including all stoppages.— Since then my time has glided past most pleasantly—lonely enough it is true—so far as the long winter evenings & nights are concerned; but this I bear with all equanimity, and when I shall have my little family gathered around me again I feel satisfied that this will prove the most comfortable nest I have ever occupied in the Service. In the beginning of November I had letters from M^{rs} Hargrave telling me of her safe arrival in London on the 3rd Oct. and that she had, a few days after, been joined by her sister and our little fellow from St. Andrews.— After spending a couple weeks in town—visiting the Crystal Palace &^c the whole party started for Scotland by steam, where I have since been

informed they have arrived and are now residing at S^t Andrews where Letitia will spend most of the winter, and where she will leave our eldest girl for her education.— Since my arrival here I have made arrangements which will allow me to start for New York in the beginning of next June—to which place my wife and our other little ones will come out at the same time from Glasgow in one of the new line of splendid Steamers lately established between these two cities, and from whence I bring them by Rail and Steam to this place,—from whence I trust the Rulers of my Destiny will not think of removing me while I continue to retain an interest in the Fur Trade.—

The Prince Albert from Moose reached London on the 13th Oct—with a cargo of similar value to the shipment from thence, last year.— The state of the home Market was reported to be very fair in regard to Martens and most other small furs; but it was found that the large import of Beaver from the North would depress the value of that fur, and it was remarked that Musquash was not in so great demand as it [had] been last year.— Looking to the bulk of the general import however—and the handsome dividends made us in last June—I have made up my mind that our next year will not fall below the mark of our last—and if this holds good— we should have no great reason to complain.

You will be suprised to learn that after all that was said last summer, Sir George still winters in Canada, compelled to do so, I regret to say, by the very delicate health of poor Lady Simpson.— Our last advices however, report her to be on the recovery; and should this hold good,—I suppose the Gov^r will carry out his intention of proceeding home next summer.—

Since my arrival here I have seen no Picayunes bearing your address, I therefore imagine that your last subscription has not been received—the paper has been stopped.— I wrote to the Editor requesting him to insert the name of M^r Barnston as a subscriber instead of your own, but my letter has met with no notice,—and there is no Agent for that paper in this quarter.— I mean however to try again through the American Postmaster on the South shore but he at present is unfortunately absent.—

Not the slightest incident in the way of public news varies the commonplace of our public prints at present.— The election of the new French President next July—is expected to cause some

excitement, and Louis Napoleon is not expected to retain his present not very enviable position.— The Romish prelates are making a loud outcry about shorn pretensions in the way of titles,—but this seems to create small sympathy for them—even amongst their own followers, and the success of the Act of Parliament—lately placed as a bit in their mouths—is looked upon as complete.

You will have heard of the death of poor James Keith and of my excellent old Bourgeois Donald M^cKenzie.— One of Ballendens boys in Scotland I am informed is also no more.— Heavy news to him this must be—severely tried as he has lately been in his family affairs!—

With kindest remembrances to my old friend M^{rs} Ross—believe me ever My Dear Friend

Most faithfully yours

J. HARGRAVE

INDEX

- ABBIS SHABBISH, an Indian murderer,
 lxxix, 166-7, 166*n*, 176
Admiral, the, 8, 8*n*
 Albert, *Prince*, 16, 21
 Alcock, Margaret, second wife of James
 Hargrave, cli, cliii, cliv
 Allan, *Miss*, governess, Red River
 Academy, 28, 28*n*, 46-7, 49, 52, 54,
 70, 81, 91, 170, 183, 198, 200, 203,
 206, 209, 210, 213, 236, 261
 American Discovery Expedition, 114*n*
 Anderson, Alexander Caulfield, 116,
 116*n*, 146
 Anderson, David, Bishop of Rupert's
 Land, cxxiii, cxxv, 244, 244*n*
 Anderson, James, 132, 132*n*
 Anderson, *Mrs.* James (Margaret Mc-
 Kenzie), 132*n*
 Anderson, *Miss*, 255, 256
 Anderson, William, lxxi, 248*n*
 Angus, Susan (*Mrs.* James Keith),
 107*n*
 Annance, John, cxxxiv, 260*n*
 Arctic Exploration Expedition, 191,
 195-6, 200. *See also* Rae, *Dr.* John
 Auld, Jane (*Mrs.* John Charles), 83*n*,
 174

 BALLANTYNE, ROBERT MICHAEL,
 xxxiii, lx-lxii, lxin, lxxxi, xciv, xcii,
 42*n*, 99, 99*n*, 148, 148*n*, 160, 160*n*,
 162, 270, 270*n*
 Ballenden, John, xxxiii, xcii, cxxvii,
 cxxxvii, 36*n*, 256*n*, 257
 Ballenden, *Mrs.* John (Sarah McLeod),
 xxxiv, cxxxiv, 52*n*, 247*n*, 255
 Barnston, George, xxiv
 Barnston, Mary, xciv*n*
Beaver, the, 117*n*
 Beechy, Frances Ann (*Mrs.* Edward
 Martin Hopkins, 2nd), 123*n*
 Beith, John, tinsmith, 92, 94, 132, 152,
 163
 Belcourt, *Monsieur*, 211-212
 Berland, Mary Ann (*Mrs.* Richard
 Grant), 83*n*
 Betsy, country wife of *Mr.* Rendall,
 xliii, 36*n*, 72, 85*n*, 213

 Betsy, Indian servant, 240
 Bird, *Mrs.* J. Curtis (1st: Frances Ross;
 2nd: Annabella Ross), 139*n*
 Bird, *Chief Factor* James, 84, 84*n*, 139*n*,
 217*n*
 Bird, *Mrs.* James (Mary Lowman),
 217*n*
 Bird, John, 94, 94*n*
 Bird, Joseph, 84, 84*n*
 Birmingham, 13
 Black, John, 208, 208*n*, 255
 Black, *Mrs.* John (*Miss* Christie), 208,
 208*n*, 255, 256
 Black, Samuel, 101-2, 101*n*
 Blanchette, François Norbert, 119-20,
 119*n*
Blenheim, the, cii, 221
 Boulton, Henry Edward, first mate,
 48*n*
 Bread-making, xcvi, 201
British Queen, the, 8, 8*n*
 Brooking, *Reverend* R., cxlvii
 Brooking, *Mrs.* R., cxlvii
 Bruce, Baptiste, *voyageur*, 78*n*
 Buffalo, 79, 169, 169*n*, 242; buffalo
 tongues, 66*n*, 149, 159, 199, 286
 Bunn, *Dr.* John, liv, 105*n*, 144, 144*n*,
 170
 Burke, Joseph, 161, 161*n*, 175

 CALDWELL, *Major* W. B., cxvii, 229,
 229*n*, 242, 246
 Cameron, Angus, bank manager, 25*n*
 Cameron, Angus, fur-trader, 156*n*, 157,
 290
 Cameron, Elizabeth, 25*n*
 Cameron, Elizabeth (*Mrs.* John George
 McTavish, 2nd), 156*n*, 156-7
 Cameron, John Dugald, lii
 Campbell, Sam, 5
 Campbell, *Captain* Tom, 4
 Capeneseweet, an Indian murderer,
 211*n*
 Chambers, Robert, civ, 270
 Chapman, *Mr.* and *Mrs.*, missionaries,
 244*n*
 Charles, Elizabeth (*Mrs.* John Ma-
 callum), 106*n*

- Charles, John, 71, 71*n*, 77, 83*n*, 93*n*, 105-6, 106*n*, 118, 174, 185, 185*n*, 200, 270, 291
 Charles, *Mrs.* John (1st, Jane Auld, 83*n*, 106, 174; 2nd, Margaret Macallum, 185*n*, 200, 261)
 Charles, *Miss*, 106
 Charles, Thomas, 162*n*
 Cholera, cxlvii, 181
 Chouinard, Elizabeth (*Mrs.* Peter Warren Dease), 78*n*
 Christie, Alexander, xxxviii, lxxxiv, cxi, 38, 38*n*, 63*n*, 151, 184, 200
 Christie, *Miss* (married to John Black), 208, 208*n*
 Christie, William, cxxvi, 196, 196*n*, 232
 Christie, *Mrs.* William (Mary Sinclair), cxxvi, 196, 196*n*, 232
 Christie, William Joseph, 196, 196*n*
 Church Missionary Society, cxxiv
 Clarke, Duncan, 14*n*, 92
 Clarke, John, 118*n*
 Clarke, Mary, lxxviii, cxv, cxliv, cxlviii, clii, 14, 14*n*, 92, 99, 108, 148, 153-4, 160-1, 180-1, 186-7, 195, 203, 207, 226-7, 228, 235, 240, 248, 250, 262
 Clare, James R., cxxxix, 198, 198*n*, 247, 248, 257-8
 Clare, *Mrs.* James R. (Margaret Sinclair), 198*n*
 Clothing, xxxi, 23, 27, 33-4, 37, 47-8, 71, 76, 89-90, 126, 129, 165, 168, 171, 172, 209, 210
 Clouston, a butler, 201
 Clouston, Anne (*Mrs.* A. E. Pelly), cxxvi, cxxxiv, 226, 245, 245*n*, 255-6
 Clouston, *Mrs.* Charles, 226
 Clouston, Edward, xxxiii, cx, 43*n*, 50-4, 55
 Clouston, *Mrs.* Edward, xcvi, 51-4, 55, 225, 226
 Clouston, James Stewart, 226*n*
 Clouston, Robert, lii, cxix-cxxi, 55*n*, 108*n*, 121, 226*n*, 230, 233, 238, 244, 244*n*, 247*n*, 249
 Clouston, *Mrs.* Robert (Jessy Ross), cxix-cxxi, 107, 185, 222, 228*n*, 230, 234-5, 238, 240, 241
 Cockran, Thomas, 145*n*
 Cockran, *Reverend* William, xlv, 69, 69*n*, 100, 145, 188, 217
 Cockran, *Mrs.* William, 188, 256
 Colville, *Governor* Eden, cxxiii, cxxxvii, 254, 255
 Colville, *Mrs.* Eden, 257
 Cooper, *Lady* Fanny, 11
 Courvoisier, F. B., a murderer, 23*n*
 Cowan, *Dr.*, cxxv
 Cowley, *Reverend* Abraham, lx, 106, 106*n*, 141, 173
 Cowley, *Mrs.* Abraham, 106, 106*n*, 141, 173
Crocodile, the, cii, 221
 Crofton, *Major*, cii
 Cromarty, John, lii, 176, 176*n*
 Crosbie, a cook, 60, 60*n*, 61
 Cumming, Cuthbert, lxvi
 Cunard, Samuel, 13*n*
 DAHL, *Mrs.*, 73
 Darling, *Lieutenant*, 231, 231*n*, 238
 Darling, *Mrs.* (Margaret Sinclair), 231*n*, 235, 238
 Darveau, Jean Edouard, 187*n*
 Daunais, a carpenter, lxxiv, lxxxiv
 Daunais, *Madame*, 105, 105*n*
 Davidson, George, a cook, 159*n*
 Davidson, John, a cook, brother of George, 255*n*
 Dease, *Dr.* John, 77*n*
 Dease, Peter Warren, 77, 77*n*, 78*n*, 94
 Dease, *Mrs.* Peter Warren (Elizabeth Chouinard), 78*n*
 Dickens, Charles, 11*n*, 37
 Douglas, (*Sir*) James, xcvi, cxxxix, 132, 132*n*, 202
 Dunnet, Elizabeth, 166, 166*n*
 Dunnet, John, xxxi, 154
 Dunnet, Margaret, xxxi, lxii, lxxviii, 20*n*, 42, 60, 83, 88, 105, 108, 111, 130, 154
 Dunnet, William, 166*n*
 ERMATINGER, Francis, cii, cxi, cxii, cxxxix, 223, 254
 Ermatinger, *Mrs.* Francis (Catherine Sinclair), 223
 Eskimos, xxxvi, 65-6, 164
 Evans, Clarissa, 85*n*, 150, 157, 173, 182, married to John McLean, 200, 208
 Evans, *Mrs.* James (Mary Blithe Smith), lv, 85*n*, 100
 Evans, *Reverend* James, liv, lv, lxx, lxxi, xcii, 59*n*, 59-60, 61, 84-5, 85*n*, 97, 98, 109, 113-14, 119, 120, 142, 150, 157-8, 173, 181, 188, 191, 196, 197, 200, 203, 207-8, 212, 218, 220, 291
 FINLAYSON, Duncan, xxv, xxx, lxxxiv, xciii, ciii, cxxxvi, 22*n*, 105, 105*n*, 130, 174, 204, 276

- Finlayson, *Mrs.* Duncan (Isobel Graham Simpson), xxx, lxxxiv, cxxxvi, 15, 15*n*, 46, 48, 68, 70, 81, 106, 141, 182, 204, 276
- Finlayson, Nicol, xxvi, xlv, 20*n*, 21, 21*n*, 216, 276
- Finlayson, *Mrs.* Nicol (daughter of *Chief Factor* Kennedy), liii, 87, 87*n*, 106
- Flett, *Mrs.* (later *Mrs.* Robert Wilson), 263
- FLORAL, the, cxxxiii
- Food, lxxii, lxxx, lxxxiv, xciii, xcvi, xcix, cix, cxiv, cxxi, 61, 76, 78, 79, 87, 90-1, 99-100, 106, 106*n*, 107-08, 113-14, 115, 134, 135, 172, 201, 226, 236, 242, 246, 297
- Foss, *Captain* C. V., cxxxiii, 246-7, 255
- Franklin, *Sir* John, cxix, cxxxii, 200
- Furs, 23, 36, 45, 101, 128-9, 134-5, 290, 295
- GARRIOCH, *Mrs.* Peter (Margaret McKenzie), 177*n*
- Garson, Bob, a cook, cxi, cxxxiv, 130, 259
- General* Palmer, the, cxvii, 229, 238*n*
- George, the, cxxxiii
- George and Vulture*, the, xxviii-xxix, 9, 9*n*, 10, 11, 38
- Gibson, *Mrs.* John, 40
- Gillespie, *Dr.* W. D., 1, civ, 41, 41*n*, 63, 75, 86, 86*n*, 97, 144, 162, 180, 207, 213, 232
- Gladman, Henry, lxxi
- Gladman, George, xlv, lxxxiv, lxxxvi, xci, xcvi, cxxxix, cxlv, 31, 31*n*, 62, 63, 73-4, 82-3, 96, 101, 110, 110*n*, 117, 121, 137, 143-6, 149, 157, 167, 169-70, 174, 177, 200, 202, 213
- Gladman, *Mrs.* George (Harriet Vincent), xlv, 1, lxxxv, 64*n*, 73-4, 82-3, 85, 87, 95, 97, 106, 109, 137, 143, 154-6, 168, 169-70
- Glasgow, the, 267
- Gold rush of 1849, 242
- Graham, James, 80
- Graham*, the, cxxiv, cxxxvi, 244, 295
- Grant, Richard, 83*n*, 94
- Grant, *Mrs.* Richard (Mary Ann Berland), 83*n*
- Gravesend, 26, 28, 30, 37
- Greenway, Francis J., bankruptcy case, 140*n*
- Grey Nuns, 205*n*
- Grierson, B. G., xiv
- Grierson, *Lady*, xiii, xiv, xv
- Grierson, *Sir* Herbert, xiii
- Guilbault, Edouard, a butler, xliii, xciv, 60, 60*n*, 61, 72-3, 158, 181
- HACKLAND, James, 162, 162*n*, 178, 240
- Haldane, *Chief Factor* John, 23, 23*n*, 291
- Hamilton, *Dr.*, xxxiv*n*, 53
- Hamilton, Gavin, lx, lx*n*, 129, 140, 143, 143*n*, 162, 182
- Hamilton, *Reverend* G. J., lx*n*
- Hamilton, John, 74
- Hamilton, Mary, 6, 39
- Hannah Bay massacre, 133*n*
- Harding, Robert F., 83*n*, 121, 198
- Hargrave, Dugald John, cxlviii, 257, 257*n*, 258
- Hargrave, James: family background and early career, xxii-xxv; meets Letitia Mactavish, xxv; marriage, xxvi; in London, xxviii-xxxi; Gravesend, Stromness and voyage out, xxi-xxxviii; chief factorship, lxxxii; goes to Council, 1846; cxviii; furlough, cii; posted to Sault Ste Marie, cxxxii; leaves for the Sault, cxxxvii; his wife's death, cxlvii; death of his son Dugald John, cxlviii; departure for home, cxlviii; return to York Factory, cli; return home, cli; second marriage, cli; departure for Canada, clii; his death, clii
- Hargrave, Joseph, *Sr.*, xxi, xxiii, cxiii, 237
- Hargrave, Joseph James, 1, lvii, lxxvii, lxxxvii-lxxxviii, civ, cxviii, cxxvi, cxxxvi, clii, cliv*n*, 95-6, 103, 105, 124, 126, 128, 137, 141, 154, 163-4, 168, 190-1, 192-3, 194, 201, 214, 264, 265, 268, 285, 293
- Hargrave, Letitia: family background, xx-xxi; marriage, xxvi; in London, xxviii-xxxi; Gravesend, xxxi; Stromness, xxxiii-xxxv; voyage out, xxxv-xxxviii; arrival at York Factory, xxxviii; spring of 1841, xlix; birth of Joseph James, 1; events in 1842, lxiv; birth and death of William, lxxiii; events in 1843, lxxiii; in 1844, lxxxii; birth of Letitia Lockhart ("Tash"), lxxxviii; events in 1845, lxxxix; in 1846, xcvi; departure on furlough, cii; events in 1847, civ; return to York Factory, cv; events in 1848, cxii; birth of Mary Jane, cxv; events in 1849, cxii; events in 1850, cxxxi; birth of

- Dugald John, cxxxiv; events in 1851, cxxxv; departure for home, cxxxviii, cxl; events in 1852, cxlii; arrival at Sault Ste. Marie, cxliii; events in 1853, cxlv; in 1854, cxlvii; her death, cxlvii.
- Hargrave, Letitia, letters of: in Liverpool, 8; in London, 9-23; in Gravesend, 24-38; in London, 38-40; in Gravesend, 41-6; on board *Prince Rupert* to Stromness, 46-51; in Stromness, 51-56; on *Prince Rupert* to Hudson Bay, 56-58; arrival at York Factory, 58; notes on journey to York Factory, 65-8; description of her house, 72, 74, 88; birth of first child, Joseph James, 95-6; birth and death of second child, William, 136-7; birth of first daughter, Letitia Lockhart ("Tash"), 189-90; journey home, 1846, 223; at Stromness, 1847, 224-29; at York Factory again, 1848, 229; birth of second daughter, Mary Jane, 230; in London, 1851, 261; at St. Andrews, 1851, 265; at Kilchrist House, 1852, 267; at Edinburgh, 1852, 268
- Hargrave, Letitia Lockhart ("Tash"), xv, cliii, clivn, 203, 214, 237, 238, 240, 243, 251, 253, 268, 269, 293
- Hargrave, Mary Jane, cxv, cliin, clivn, 230, 238, 241, 243, 248, 253, 259, 269
- Hargrave, William, 136-7
- Harriott, John Edward, 119n, 198
- Hassel, Thomas, as interpreter, 191, 196
- Helmcken, Dr. John Sebastian, cvi, 225, 225n
- Hendry, Dr. 86n
- Herd, Captain David, of the *Prince Rupert*, cvi, cxxxiii, 19, 19n, 20-21, 24, 27, 40, 154, 218, 225, 262
- Hogue, Amable, 205n
- Hooper, Lieutenant, 262, 266
- Hop-fields, 36-7
- Hopkins, Edward Martin, lxix, 123, 123n
- Hopkins, Mrs. Edward Martin (1st: Anne Ogden; 2nd: Frances Ann Beechy), 123n
- Houston, a cook, xliii, 108n
- Hunter, Reverend James, lxxxviii, 185, 185n, 193, 193n, 231, 244n
- Hunter, Mrs. James, 185, 185n, 193, 193n, 231; 2nd, Jane Ross, 231. *See also* Ross, Jane
- Hunt, Reverend R., 244n
- Hunt, Mrs. R., 244n
- IGNEABITAM, an Indian servant, cxlv, 137
- Indians, 61-2, 73, 76, 94-5, 96, 97-8, 101-4, 107, 107n, 109, 110, 111, 113, 119, 122-3, 127, 133, 134, 138, 159, 164, 166-7, 173, 177-8, 193, 211-12, 242, 279-80
- Influenza, xcv, c, 197, 289
- Ingham, Mrs. (married Robert Logan), 28n
- Ironside, Annie (Mrs. Wemyss McKenzie Simpson, 1st), 205n
- Ironside, Eliza (Mrs. Wemyss McKenzie Simpson, 2nd), 205n
- Isbister, Alexander K., lxxii, cxviii, 127n
- JACOBS, Peter, 113, 113n, 177, 212
- James, Reverend R., 222
- James, Mrs. R., 261, 263
- Jane, the, lxxii, lxxxiii, 150, 172, 175, 179-80, 182
- Jones, Reverend David T., 97, 97n
- KEITH, Chief Factor James, xlvi, 35n, 107n, 156, 157, 291
- Keith, Mrs. James (Susan Angus), 107n, 205n
- Keith, Mary (Mrs. Thomas Taylor), 35n
- Kellock, Dr., lxxviii, 162, 171
- Klein, John F., 32n, 261, 265, 266
- Lady Fitz Herbert, the, 236, 238n
- Lane, Richard, 75n, 90, 101
- Lane, Mrs. Richard (Mary McDermot), 75n
- Langlands, Matthew, 267n
- LeBlanc, Pierre, 34n, 36n
- LeBlanc, Mrs. Pierre (Nancy McKenzie McTavish), 35, 35n, 36, 36n. *See also* McKenzie, Nancy.
- Lefroy, Sir Henry, lxxviii, 175, 175n
- Legros, Antoine, 94, 94n
- L'Esperance, Alexis, a *voyageur*, 78, 78n
- Lewes, John Lee, cxxxix, 138, 138n, 181
- Liverpool, 11, 12, 13
- Lockhart, James, 247n
- Logan, Alexander, 75n
- Logan, Robert, 28n
- Logan, Mrs. Robert (Mrs. Ingham), 28n
- London, xxviii-xxxi, 9-23, 38-40, 261
- Lowman, Mary (Mrs. James Bird), 217-18, 217n
- Lyall, H. B., 20n

- McARTHUR, Neil M., 187, 187*n*
 McBeth, Alexander, 85*n*
 McBeth, Mary (*Mrs.* Donald Ross), 85*n*
 McBair, *Mrs.* 53*n*
 Macallum, *Reverend* John, of the Red River Academy, 28*n*, 177, 200, 206
 Macallum, *Mrs.* John (Elizabeth Charles), 106, 106*n*, 254, 256, 270
 Macallum, Margaret (*Mrs.* John Charles), 185*n*, 200, 261
 McDermot, Andrew, lix, 208*n*
 McDermot, *Mrs.* Henry (Annabella Ross), 139*n*
 McDermot, Mary (*Mrs.* Richard Lane), 75*n*
 McDermot, Sarah (*Mrs.* William Mactavish), clii
 McDermot, Thomas, 98*n*
 McDonald, Archibald, lxxv, 116*n*
 Macfarlane, *Miss* Letitia, xiv
 McKay, Mary (*Mrs.* William Sinclair), 206*n*
 McKay, a tinsmith, 132
 McKenzie, Angélique (*Mrs.* Roderick McKenzie), liii, lvi
 McKenzie, Anne (daughter of John George Mctavish and Nancy McKenzie), 83*n*, 84
 McKenzie, Donald, a clerk, xxv
 McKenzie, *Chief Factor* Donald, xxv, 34*n*
 McKenzie, Flora (daughter of John George Mctavish and Nancy McKenzie) 84
 McKenzie, Hector, 99*n*, 199, 199*n*
 McKenzie, Isabella (*Mrs.* Cornelius Pruden), 177*n*
 McKenzie, Jane (daughter of Roderick McKenzie), liii, liv, 201*n*
 McKenzie, Kenneth, 177*n*
 McKenzie, Margaret (daughter of John George Mctavish and Nancy McKenzie), 84
 McKenzie, Margaret (*Mrs.* James Anderson), 132*n*
 McKenzie, Margaret (*Mrs.* Peter Garrioch), 177*n*
 McKenzie, Mary (daughter of John George Mctavish and Nancy McKenzie), 84
 McKenzie, Nancy (country wife of John George Mctavish and Sir George Simpson, later married Pierre LeBlanc), xxiv, 34*n*, 35, 35*n*, 36, 36*n*, 83*n*, 84
 McKenzie, Peter, 291
 McKenzie, Roderick, liii, 127, 127*n*, 132*n*, 168-9, 181
 McLaughlin, John, 245*n*
 McLaughlin, *Mrs.* John, 245, 249
 McLean, John, xciv, 151*n*, 156, 157, 182, 193, 193*n*, 208, married to Clarissa Evans, 200, 297
 McLean, *Mrs.* John (Clarissa Evans), 200. *See also* Evans, Clarissa.
 McLeod, *Chief Trader* John, 14, 14*n*
 McLeod, Sarah (*Mrs.* John Ballenden), 247*n*
 McLoughlin, David, 116*n*
 McLoughlin, *Dr.* John, 84, 84*n*, 102, 116, 149, 202, 245*n*
 McLoughlin, *Mrs.* John (Marguerite Wadin McKay), 206*n*, 223
 McLoughlin, John, *Jr.*, 138, 138*n*, 145, 149
 McLoughlin, Joseph, 84*n*
 McMillan, J., 290
 McPherson, Andrew, 120*n*
 McPherson, Murdoch, xliii, cxxxix, 77, 77*n*, 193
 McTaggart, Merrian, 51
 McTaggart, *Mrs.* 22*n*
 Mactavish, Alexander, xxi, cliv*n*, 4
 Mctavish, Anne (daughter of John George Mctavish and Nancy McKenzie), 83*n*, 84
 Mactavish, *Dr.* Colin, 7
 Mactavish, *Sheriff* Dugald, xv, xx, xxvii, xxxii, cxlix
 Mactavish, *Mrs.* Dugald (Letitia Lockhart), xx, cxlix
 Mactavish, Dugald, xxi, xln, xlv, lxix, lxxxvi, xciii, cliv*n*, 4, 4*n*, 31, 63, 76-7, 101, 115, 116, 118, 123, 130, 132, 186, 188, 198-9, 202, 204, 210, 217, 222, 252, 278, 281
 Mctavish, Elizabeth (daughter of John George Mctavish), 204
 Mctavish, Flora (daughter of John George Mctavish), 252
 Mactavish, Florence (Flora), xv, xx, lxix, lxxiv, cl, cliv*n*
 Mctavish, Frances (daughter of John George Mctavish), 204, 252
 Mactavish, Hector, xxi, xxvii, lxxxvii, xcii, 152, 170, 203
 Mctavish, John George, xxi, xxin, xxiii, xxiv, xxxviii, lxvi, lxix, cxii, 24*n*, 34-5, 76, 117, 117*n*, 152, 157, 233
 Mctavish, *Mrs.* John George (1st: Catherine Turner, lxviii, 4*n*, 34-5, 34*n*; 2nd: Elizabeth Cameron, 156-7, 156*n*)
 Mactavish, John George, *Jr.*, xxi, 4, 4*n*

- Mactavish, Lachlan, xx
 Mactavish, Lockhart, xxi, clivn, 4, 4n
 Mactavish, Maggie, 5
 McTavish, Margaret (*Mrs.* Courtenay Walker), 36n
 Mactavish, Mary (Polly), xx, ciii, 34-5, 34n
 McTavish, Mary (daughter of John George McTavish), 34-5
 Mactavish, William, xxi, xlv, lix, lxxviii, lxxxi, lxxxv-lxxxvii, xcii, cviii, cxv, cxvii, cxxi, cxxxi-ii, cxxxiii, cxxxviii, cxlix, cl, cli, clii, clivn; 5n, 59, 68, 70, 75, 90, 101, 104, 109n, 116, 118, 125, 128, 141, 143, 148-9, 152, 174, 176, 179, 180, 184, 186, 190, 194, 198, 200, 203, 211, 213, 215, 222, 230, 239n, 246, 249-50, 255, 258, 279, 285, 287, 288, 292, 296
 Manson, Donald, xlv, 58n, 77
 Mason, *Reverend* William, 137, 137n, 176, 176n, 177, 188, 212
 Mason, *Mrs.* William (Sophia Thomas), 176n
 Measles, c, 221
 Miles, George, cxviii, 239, 239n
 Miles, John, 264
 Miles, Robert Seaborn, 85n
 Miles, *Mrs.* Robert (Betsy Sinclair), xliii, 36n, 72, 85n, 213
 Mills, *Mrs.*, head of St. Cross school, 260n
 Mills, Mary, 262, 264
 Missionaries: *See* Anderson, David; Belcourt, *Monsieur*; Blanchette, François Norbert; Brooking, R.; Chapman; Cochran, William; Cowley, Abraham; Evans, James; Hunter, James; Hunt, R.; Jacobs, Peter; James, R.; Jones, David; Macallum, John; Mason, William; Roberts, J.; Rundle, R. T.; Rverson, John; Smithurst, John; Thibault, Jean-Baptiste
 Mowat, Edward, lxxxii, 260n
 Mowat, *Miss* Maggy, 261, 263, 264
 Munro, David, a cooper, 72n
 Munro, *Mrs.* David (Betsy Sinclair), xliii, 36n, 72, 85n, 213

 NANCY, an Indian servant, lxxviii, 159, 172-3, 185-6
 Nesbitt, *Mrs.*, an actress, 22
 Nevins, J. B., surgeon, xxxviii-xxxix, xl, 1, 172

 O'BRIEN, John, 166, 166n, 261n
 Ogden, Anne (*Mrs.* Edward Martin Hopkins), 123n
 Ogden, [Peter Skene], 202
 Ogilvy, Tom, 8, 13
 Ogston, *Sir* Alexander, clivn
 Ogston, *Lady* (Mary Jane Hargrave), clivn. *See also* Hargrave, Mary Jane Ooligbuck, an Eskimo, 164n

 PAMBRUN, Pierre, 107n
 Peers, Augustus Richard, lix-lxx, cxix, 120n, 142, 146, 181
 Peers, Henry Lewsham, 120n
 Pelly, A. E., cxxvi, 245, 245n, 247, 247n, 255-6
 Pelly, *Mrs.* A. E. (Anne Clouston), cxxvi, cxxxiv, 226, 245, 245n, 255-6
 Pelly, Robert Parker, 133, 133n
 Philpin, W. B., 86, 86n
 Potter, *Mrs.*, a servant, 49n, 52, 60, 70, 216
 Potts, Tom, cv, 139n, 267, 268
 Poukie John, *Madame*, 95, 110
 Powder magazine, cix, 76
 Pridham, of the Red River Academy, 253, 253n
 Prince, Jane, country wife of Captain George Taylor, 20n
Prince Albert, the, 225n
Prince of Wales, the, cxxxiii, cxl, 252
Prince Rupert, the, lviii, cii, cxvii, cxxxiii
 Pruden, *Mrs.* Cornelius (Isabella McKenzie), 178n
 Pruden, John Peter, 218n
 Pruden, *Mrs.* John Peter (*Miss* Armstrong), 218, 218n
 Puget's Sound Agricultural Company, 64n, 202
 Pullen, *Lieutenant*, cxxxv, 262, 262n, 266

 RAE, *Dr.* John, xxxiii, lxxxix, xcvi, cx, cxix, cxxxii, 51n, 191, 191n, 196, 200, 211, 216, 242, 292
 Rae, *Mrs.* John (Margaret Glen), xxxiii, 51, 51n
 Rae, Richard, xxxiv, 51, 51n
 Rae, Thomas, xxxiv
 Rae, William Glen, xxxiii, xxxiv, xcix, 51n
 Ramsay, *Miss* A. A. W., xiii, xxin, lv
 Red River Academy, 28n, 177-8, 206, 253, 253n. *See also* Allan, Miss; and Macallum, *Reverend* John
 Red River Settlement, lxxxii, lxxxiv, xciii, ci, cvii, cxiv, cxvii, cxxxiii, cxxxiv, 106, 191, 200, 208, 211, 218, 221, 229-30, 255-6

- Rendall, John, xliii, 32*n*, 72; his country wife, Betsy, xliii
 Richardson, *Sir* John, cxix, 242
 Roberts, Edward, 36*n*, 264
 Roberts, *Reverend* J., 104, 104*n*, 141, 166, 188
 Robertson, Colin, 117, 117*n*, 121
 Ross, Annabella (1: *Mrs.* Henry McDermot; 2: *Mrs.* J. Curtis Bird), 139*n*, 213, 228*n*, 256
 Ross, Charles, 193
 Ross, Christina, 228*n*
 Ross, Clementina, 139*n*, 228*n*
 Ross, David Hume, cvi, 234, 239
 Ross, Donald, xxxv, lxv, lxvii, lxxxv, cii, cxviii, cxix, cxxvii, cxxx, cxxxix, cxxxix*n*, cxlvi, 70-1, 70*n*, 80, 85*n*, 157-8, 167, 212, 228*n*
 Ross, *Mrs.* Donald (Mary McBeth), 85*n*, 173, 185
 Ross, Frances (*Mrs.* J. Curtis Bird), 139*n*, 228*n*
 Ross, Jane (*Mrs.* James Hunter, 2*nd*), xxxv, 45, 45*n*, 46, 47, 48, 70, 80-1, 107, 185, 216, 228*n*, 231
 Ross, Jessie (*Mrs.* Robert Clouston), cxix-cxxi, 107, 185, 222, 228*n*, 234-5, 238, 240, 241
 Ross, John, 228*n*
 Ross, Robert, 228
 Ross, Roderick, 228*n*
 Rothnies, Helen, a servant, 146*n*
 Rowand, John, lxvi, xcvi, cxxxix, 207, 207*n*, 242
 Rowand, John, *Jr.*, xcvi, c, 207, 207*n*
 Royal, *Captain*, of the *Prince Albert*, 225, 225*n*
 Royal Engineers, 221*n*
 Rundle, *Reverend* R. T., 236, 236*n*, 239
 Russell, *Lord* William, 22-3, 23*n*
 Russians, 114, 138, 147
 Rutherford, Andrew, *Lord Advocate*, 7, 7*n*
 Ryerson, *Reverend* John, cxlvii

 SAULT STE. MARIE, cxxxii, cxlii-cxliii, cxliv-cxlviii
 Saunders, doctor of the *Prince of Wales*, 252, 261
 Scarlet fever, 172, 181
 Schofield, James Hargrave, xiv
 Scott, *Mrs.* (Ann Simpson), 19*n*
 Scurvy, xc*v*
 Selkirk, *Earl of*, 40*n*
 Simpson, *Æmilius*, 125*n*
 Simpson, Alexander, 125, 125*n*, 139
 Simpson, Ann (*Mrs.* Scott), 19, 19*n*
 Simpson, Augusta d'Este, 107*n*
 Simpson, Eliza, 206
 Simpson, Frances (*Mrs.* Geddes McKenzie Simpson), 15*n*, 25
 Simpson, Frances Ramsay. *See* Simpson, *Sir* George and *Lady*.
 Simpson, Frances Webster, 25*n*
 Simpson, Geddes McKenzie, 15*n*, 234*n*
 Simpson, *Mrs.* Geddes McKenzie (Frances), 15*n*, 25
 Simpson, *Governor* (later *Sir*) George, and *Lady* Simpson, xxvi, xxviii, xxix, xxx*n*, xxxi, xxxii*n*, xci, xcii, ci, cii, cxix, cxxi-cxxiii, cxxxvii, cxi, death of *Lady* Simpson, cxlvi; 12, 12*n*, 15, 15*n*, 20*n*, 25-6, 34, 34*n*, 36*n*, 37, 43, 46, 85*n*, 117, 147, 149, 150, 156, 174, 183, 204, 205*n*, 212, 221, 230, 255, 258, 298, 301
 Simpson, George, *Jr.*, 205*n*
 Simpson, George Geddes, 35*n*
 Simpson, Isobel Graham (*Mrs.* Duncan Finlayson), 15*n*
 Simpson, James, 205*n*
 Simpson, James Keith, 205*n*
 Simpson, John, 205*n*
 Simpson, John Henry Pelly, 255*n*
 Simpson, Margaret McKenzie, 255*n*
 Simpson, Maria, 36*n*, 205*n*
 Simpson, Thomas, xlv, xlv*n*, 77, 93-4, 93*n*, 100, 100*n*, 298
 Simpson, Webster, 19*n*, 264
 Simpson, Wemyss McKenzie, 205, 205*n*
 Simpson, *Mrs.* Wemyss McKenzie (1: Annie Ironside, 205*n*; 2: Eliza Ironside, 205*n*)
 Sinclair, James, 208*n*
 Sinclair, Margaret (*Mrs.* Darling), xcvi, xcvi*i*, c, 206-7, 206*n*, 212, 216, 219, 231*n*, 231-2
 Sinclair, Mary (*Mrs.* William Christie), cxxvi, 232
 Sinclair, William, xcvi, cii, 104, 104*n*, 216, 254
 Sinclair, *Mrs.* William (Mary McKay), 206*n*
 Siveright, John, cxi
 Sixth Royal Regiment of Foot, 221*n*
 Skin disease, 217
 Smellie, *Dr.*, cviii, cxxv, 198, 207, 214, 216, 227, 238, 244*n*, 249
 Smith, John, 20*n*
 Smith, William Gregory, 263, 263*n*
 Smithurst, *Reverend* John, 120, 120*n*
 Stefansson, *Dr.* Vilhjalmur, 65*n*
 Stewart, David, 155
 Stewart, Juliet, 165, 165*n*
 Stewart, R. D., 73, 82-3, 82*n*

- Stoves, Russian, lxxx, 147
 Stromness, xxxiii-xxxv
 Stuart, *Chief Factor* John, 11, 11*n*, 14, 19-20, 20*n*, 21, 23, 30, 34
 Stuart, *Mrs.* (Mary Taylor), 20, 20*n*, 87
 Swanston, John, 133, 133*n*
- TAYLOR, George, 20*n*, 195, 195*n*
 Taylor, *Captain* George, 20*n*
 Taylor, Margaret, country wife of Sir George Simpson, 20*n*, 205*n*
 Taylor, Mary, country wife of John Stuart, 20, 20*n*, 87
 Taylor, Thomas, 20*n*, 35, 35*n*
 Thew, William, 140*n*, 166
 Thibault, Jean-Baptiste, 188, 188*n*
 Thom, Adam, recorder of Rupert's Land, cxxxiv*n*, 211, 255
 Thom, *Mrs.* Adam, 146
 Thomas, Sophia (*Mrs.* William Mason), 176*n*
 Thomas, Anne, 63*n*
 Thomas, Thomas, 45*n*, 63*n*
 Thorne, George, 78*n*
 Tod, John, cxxxix
 Todd, *Dr.* William, xci, xclvii, 135, 135*n*, 143, 166, 200
 Todd, *Mrs.* William (Elizabeth Dunnet), 166*n*
 Tolmie, *Dr.* William Fraser, li, 102, 102*n*, 118, 130-31
 Traill, Thomas Stewart, 215*n*
 Turner, Catherine (*Mrs.* John George McTavish), lxxviii, lxxix, 4*n*, 34, 35
 Turner, *Miss* 123
 Turner, *Mrs.*, a servant, lvii, 49*n*, 52, 60, 60*n*
 Typhus, 150
 Tyrrell, J. B., *quoted*, xlin
- VESTRIS, *Madame*, an actress, 22
 Victoria, *Queen*, coronation of, postponed, 6*n*
 Vincent, *Mr.*, 155
 Vincent, *Governor* Thomas, 64*n*, 82*n*
 Vincent, *Mrs.* Thomas (Mary McNab), 64*n*, 82, 82*n*
- WALKER, *Mrs.* Courtenay (Margaret McTavish), 36*n*
 Warriner, *Mrs.*, of the *George and Vulture*, 10, 10*n*, 39
 Webster, *Captain*, of the *Lady Fitz Herbert*, 236
 Webster, James, 25*n*, 37, 54, 79-80
 Webster, *Mrs.* James, 25*n*, 37, 54, 79-80, 118
 Wellington, *Duke of*, 16
 Westminster, the, cvii, 225
 Whiffen, *Dr.* E. H., 41*n*
 Whooping cough, 143, 172, 231
 Wills, *Dr.*, cxxv, 257, 258
 Wills, *Mrs.*, cxxv, 245, 246, 250, 251*n*, 257, 258
 Wilson, Robert, lv, 86-7, 86*n*, 91, 135, 196, 263*n*
 Wilson, *Mrs.* Robert (*Mrs.* Flett), 263
 Wood, doctor of the *Prince Rupert*, 252
 Worsley, *Mr.* and *Mrs.*, 7, 15, 16, 17, 22, 26-7
- YOUNG, Andrew, civ

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